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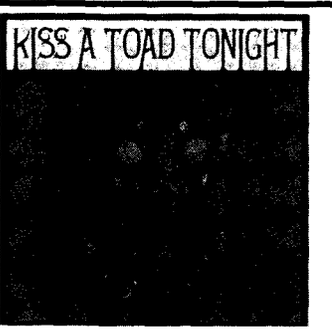

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NEWS & VIEWS

Knocking Rock-land

The high priests of Rock get an unceremonious knock in, of all places, Liberation News Service, news conduit by and of the underground press which hitherto had handled Rock-land with the reverence of churchmen dealing with the scriptures.

John Wiener does the lecturing, charging Rock's lofty figures with aiding and abetting "business dominance of pop music [by] turning their music into a commodity to be sold to whoever has the money."

Bob Dylan "demanded" $85,000 for his Isle of Wight appearance, Wiener sermonizes, a sum he averages out at more than $7,000 a song.

And, "if you want to hear Joan Baez sing about not paying her income taxes because they go to war, you have to pay for it."

Wiener's harangue came in the course of a Woodstock retrospective, in which he seizes gleefully on *Variety*'s disclosure that Woodstock was not at all the financial disaster its promoters alleged.

Woodstock "was not a victory 'for the people,'" Wiener remarks. "It was a victory for the businessmen-promoters, men who make a profit by exploiting youth culture."

The "$1 million loss" claimed by the organizers is dismissed as a complete fabrication, "part of a clever . . . attempt to fool the public and undermine the radicals' attack on their operation."

Wiener does not estimate Woodstock's profit beyond suggesting it was considerable—even before income from the feature-length film on the event, which Warner's is releasing around Christmastime. (Warner's expects "Woodstock" to be its biggest box-office of the season.)

Especially padded is said to be the $600,000 reportedly spent on emergency helicopters, food and medicine. "But their eight helicopters cost $500 an hour," Wiener exclaims. "For three ten-hour days, that's only $120,000, which leaves $480,000 for food and medicine . . . But, as everyone who was there has testified, virtually the only source of food and medicine was the Hog Farm. The promoters' claimed emergency costs were a half-million dollar lie."

Another grand lie, says Wiener, is the $250,000 which the promoters state was paid for talent. "Simply adding up what they say they paid the individual acts gives the figure of $150,000."

Wiener itemizes Woodstock's talent costs—$18,000 for the Jimi Hendrix Experience; $15,000 for Blood, Sweat and Tears; $15,000 for Creedence Clearwater Revival; $7,500 for Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, etc.

The figures heat Wiener's blood. "We don't need any more multi-day Rock festivals with expensive tickets," he fumes. "Instead we need free concerts, and lots of them—free music in all the parks every week. Contributions or low-priced admissions could cover the expenses of the bands."

Well, it's all a little naive, and in some respects unfair, particularly to Joan Baez.

"Joan Baez insisted at her last New York concert that no one be allowed in for less than $2," Wiener scolds. The fact is, Joan Baez specified that no seat was to cost *more than* $2, so there would be no unholy trading on her public. The concert in question was in Madison Square Garden; a call to officials there reveals that for an event of this sort tickets would ordinarily have ranged up to $8.

Whatever that, Wiener's piece is out to the underground press. *Rolling Stone* or some other publication will set the record straight. But it is interesting nonetheless that Liberation News Service processed the article. Now to guess whether this testifies to LNS's indiscrimination, or its brutal candidness in reporting even on those things which are closest to the heart.

The Military Version

Lockheed gives the rest of us a lesson in how to have it both ways.

In general circulation magazines, it merchandizes the C-5A supermonster as a plane of mercy speeding relief to disaster areas [*Commonweal*, 10/17/69]. In military journals like *Air Force*, however, the C-5A is hard core machinery of death.

Lockheed's ads are identical in format, layout, type families, etc. But catch the message in *Air Force*:

"The C-5A Galaxy . . . is like having a military base in nearly every strategic spot on the globe . . . A fleet of U.S. Air Force C-5As, each shouldering 130 tons of helicopters, heavy artillery, tanks, trucks, folding bridges, munitions, medicine, food, fuel and men, will make this the only country that can move an army across an ocean in hours."

Which is precisely the ability which some senators were leery about the Strangeloves in the Pentagon acquiring, and one ground on which they fought the C-5A appropriations—to no avail.

Lockheed is patently thrilled with itself. "Keeping up with the U.S. has never been easy," its *Air Force* ad proclaims. Now the rest of the world can try to catch up." . . . Precisely the stuff of arms races.

Nixon and Mendes F.

Le Monde, in a precede to its Moratorium coverage:

"The courage and determination to achieve peace are hardly compatible with 'peace with honor.' It was this choice that Pierre Mendès France made in 1954 to settle the first Indochina war. At the time he was accused of 'selling out' part of France's patrimony. It is now clear that he was acting in the best interests of the country.

"The fact that an estimated 20 million Americans took part in anti-war demonstrations across the U.S. seems to indicate that if Mr. Nixon should decide to get out of the Vietnam impasse, he could count on far more popular support than M. Mendès France had when he moved France through the first, painful stages of decolonization." JOHN DEEDY

The view from London

Trog in the Daily Mail

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Defregger Affair

Lawton, Okla.

To the Editors: Harvey Cox's comment on two contemporary Catholic bishops ["News & Views," Oct. 31] suggests that his knowledge of current events is as hazy as his knowledge of apostolic times. Shannon was never "kicked out" of his church, he left on his own account for obvious reasons; and Defregger's carrying out of orders was not so very different from that of one Saul, who later became known as St. Paul. CAROLE MYERS RENO

West Lafayette, Ind.

To the Editors: Thank you for Fr. Berrigan's sensitive and moving article on Bishop Defregger. As a clergyman and friend of the Catholic church, I have been troubled by the Defregger affair. The church appears to have assumed the ridiculous position of condemning a housewife's use of birth control pills on the basis that it destroys the sanctity of life while affirming the conduct of a bishop who, while an SS officer, ordered the execution of innocent hostages. The church condemns only the abstract sins. CHARLES S. SLAP

Harvard Forever

Cambridge

To the Editors: Mr. Papke's comments on Harvard Commencement ["Goodbye, Harvard," Oct. 3] ought to be weighed against the historical inaccuracies in his account. Since he speaks of caps "pulled on tighter rather than removed," he could not have been standing among the *summa* recipients who, in great numbers (red armbands notwithstanding), gracefully removed their mortarboards as President and Fellows passed. Again, Papke should have taken a more careful count before asserting that the senior clase "rose in unison" to applaud a rhetorical "trickery" in the graduated English disquisition.

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IDEA FOR A MAGAZINE

Volume I, No. 1 of *Commonweal* was dated November 12, 1924. As we commemorate the magazine's 45th Anniversary, that issue deserves examination, especially, perhaps, for the statement of editorial purpose it contained. Why, the founding editors asked themselves, another magazine when there were already so many? What quality would make the new publication distinctive? To these questions the editors replied:

"We believe that *The Commonweal* will be so fundamentally different to our contemporaries that in place of competition in an over-crowded field we shall occupy a position that hitherto has been left vacant. For the difference between *The Commonweal* and other weekly literary reviews designed for general circulation is that *The Commonweal* will be definitely Christian in its presentation of orthodox religious principles and their application to the subjects that fall within their purview: principles which until now have not, we believe, been expressed in American journalism except through the medium of the official organs of the Catholic church and of the various denominations."

The magazine was one of religious inspiration, then, describing itself as "A Weekly Review of Literature, the Arts and Public Affairs" and aimed at applying immutable principles to day-to-day affairs. Immediately typical of the magazine's future attitude was the fact that the initial statement of purpose and declaration of religious inspiration, obviously important as it was, was not the lead editorial in the first issue; that pride of place was reserved for a long discourse on the newly elected President, Calvin Coolidge.

This same striving for balance between sacred and secular was reflected in the rest of the issue and was to become a lasting characteristic of the magazine, with the effort to apply Christian principles to specific subjects perhaps rather more obvious in the early days than was later felt to be

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necessary. One article in that first issue stressed the need for Catholic and non-Catholic cooperation—a note to be recurrent during the next 45 years. G. K. Chesterton contributed an article on religion and sex; historian Theodore Maynard described the work of Junipero Serra and the Catholic role in the founding of California; novelist Henry Longan Stuart wrote in glowing terms about the French ultramontane Louis Veuillot; Bertram C. A. Windle looked at religion's old antagonist and detected hopefully anti-mechanistic trends in an article called "Science Sees the Light." Book reviews, six poems, and a consideration of "What Price Glory?" and other plays by the distinguished Richard Dana Skinner rounded things off.

From the first the editors left no doubt that they took religion seriously. Thus in their lead editorial on the new President the editors wrote: "We have an abiding faith in the power of this nation to meet and master its problems provided only that it approaches them with true humility—the clear knowledge that the best we have achieved in the past and the best we shall achieve is based on the simplest of virtues, the inborn reliance on God." Affirming that the magazine would not be the organ of any political party, the editors at the same time made their own the words of Plutarch: "There never was a state of atheists. . . . Sooner may a city stand without foundations, than a society without belief in the gods." The vocabulary of such discussions has been radically transformed, but certainly the first editors would have found nothing strange or unusual in our marking the magazine's 45th Anniversary with an issue devoted to belief in the modern world.

The new weekly was to be somehow "religious" in inspiration, then, but the editors from the first stressed its "non-official" character. The magazine, they said, would be in one sense Catholic but "it will be in no sense—nor could it possibly assert itself to be—an authoritative or authorized mouthpiece of the Catholic church. It will be the independent, personal product of the editors and contributors, who, for the most part, will be laymen. Its pages will be open to writers holding different forms of Christian belief, and in some cases to authors who do not profess any form of Christian belief."

In the years since 1924 this "unofficial" nature of the magazine long proved to be one of the most difficult points to get across. How could a magazine be Catholic in any way, people wanted to know, unless it "spoke for the Church" (meaning the hierarchy)? Indeed, how could a magazine be Catholic in any sense and still disagree with and on occasion directly criticize Catholic leaders, up to and including the Pope? Until the Second Vatican Council such questions led to many a heated debate, and often enough to bitter denunciations. Happily, though, the fact of the Council seems to have put a stop to such questions; the editors still get their share of brickbats, but usually on other grounds.

In the early days of *Commonweal* (the "*The*" was dropped in 1965, somewhat reluctantly, as part of a new cover design), the magazine was published by a group known as the Calvert Associates, a name picked, very typically, for its historic associations, at once American and Catholic. Arguing for the compatibility of Catholicism and democracy was for many years a strong editorial concern, right up to the not-so-long-ago days of Paul Blanshard and his preoccupation with Catholic power. As others have noted, though, the era of the two Johns, JFK and John XXIII, seems to have spelled finish to that issue.

The founders' times were clearly more optimistic than our own post-Auschwitz, post-Hiroshima, post-Vietnam age, a fact also evidenced in the magazine's first issue. It was, the editors wrote, "unquestionably a clear social duty for Catholics to contribute to the efforts now being made by all men and women of good will, to bring peace upon earth, brotherhood among men, happiness to all peoples, and prosperity, good order, and the fruits of civilization—art, beauty, and culture—to our nation."

Heaven knows that the world of President Calvin Coolidge—and of G. K. Chesterton, for that matter—seems a long way off today, and nothing makes one more conscious of the fact than an editorial statement like that. Times have changed immeasurably; civic society, the church and our understanding of the church are drastically different. Thus in the four and one-half decades since the first issue, various editors have conceived of the role of the magazine in different ways and somewhat differing terms, naturally enough, and the editors whose views we have sought for this issue are no exception. That this is so should surprise no one; on such questions differences of opinion are at once inevitable and helpful.

Nonetheless, certain basic things about *Commonweal* are constant. To use the words of the first editors: peace on earth, brotherhood among men, happiness and prosperity, the fruits of civilization, art, beauty and culture —on such broad goals we can certainly all agree, even though their accomplishment seems harder to us than it did 45 years ago. Changes have taken place in the magazine, and there will undoubtedly be more. Whatever the shifts in emphasis and style, however, the central inspiration of the founding fathers remains the inner core of the magazine. We gladly acknowledge our debt to them, and we welcome this opportunity to express our thanks also to all the editors and contributors to the magazine over the years, to our loyal subscribers, to our faithful friends and supporters, especially to the Commonweal Associates, and to everyone who has helped in any way to make a reality of what the founding editors would probably have considered a wildly ambitious goal—continuous independent publication for 45 years. To all, our gratitude.

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1. PROBLEMS OF BELIEF *A thinking man's guide to God & religion & death & revolution & Alice in Wonderland.*

ON MAKING CHRISTIANITY HABITABLE

Religion is something men do, not something they believe

KENNETH REXROTH

Today there is going on the greatest reorganization of values in Christianity since at least the Protestant Reformation. Actually, this revaluation goes deeper. It is unparalleled since apostolic times. Accompanying it is a widespread failure of belief in the church, in its discipline and dogma, in the Christian doctrines of the incarnation and atonement, in the concept of deity which is peculiar to Christianity, Judaism and Islam. This has happened suddenly and within the church itself. It is not the Gentiles who find it all a stumbling block and confusion, but the Chosen People themselves. The revaluation of values is shaking thousands out of the church altogether.

Men outside the church have little conception of the depth of questioning, not just amongst the laity but among priests and nuns, monks, theologians and bishops. A few of the clergy and religious who renounce their vows and marry get into newspapers, but this is only a superficial symptom, sensational and easily comprehended by the non-religious public, of far more fundamental questioning, doubt and rejection. We are witnessing a wave of disbelief, greater than those which accompanied the growth of modern scientific materialism in the 19th century, and of rationalism in the 18th. Furthermore, the people concerned are precisely those to whom we would not have expected this to happen—trained theologians and dedicated religious who were given ready answers to every conceivable doubt. It would seem that the worldview of Christianity is no more implausible now than it was in the days of Mill, Spencer, Haeckel, or on a popular level, Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll. They have all been answered. Suddenly the answers have become irrelevant.

What are the reasons for contemporary loss of faith? Once we have found them, perhaps we can redefine both faith and its foundations. How can a man of the latter end of the 20th century, thoroughly familiar with modern science, literature and the arts be a Catholic?

The worldview of science has changed, not just since the days of Newton or Darwin but of Einstein. We live in an illimitable universe in which, visible in the largest telescopes, sub-universes other than ours, galactic nebulae, are more numerous than the stars in our own nebula. We can measure phenomena coming from six billion light years away. Whether this universe is infinite and eternal, contracting and expanding, steady state or exploding, room in it for a moral cosmogony which is man centered, centered on this solar system, or even this little universe seems ridiculous and trivial. Buddhism, on the other hand, begins with a compound infinity of infinities and goes straight to the empirically validated religious act, unqualified and unqualifiable.

We can etherialize the myth of creation and redemption in the Old and New Testaments but however much we do so, we are haunted by a hankering sense of its implausibility, its lack of sufficient reason. It simply doesn't seem to be an efficient way to go about things. Of course there are plenty of absolutely conclusive neo-scholastic arguments in its favor. They don't seem to be relevant, however logic tight. Their very logical efficiency seems to invalidate them. This has nothing to do with the dilemmas that trouble liberal theologians. The easiest thing in the world to believe is a mystery. It is easier to believe that Our Lord came through the maidenhead of the Blessed Virgin like light through glass than it is to believe in the efficacy of the incarnation and atonement under their historical circumstances. Of course it is even more difficult to believe, walking

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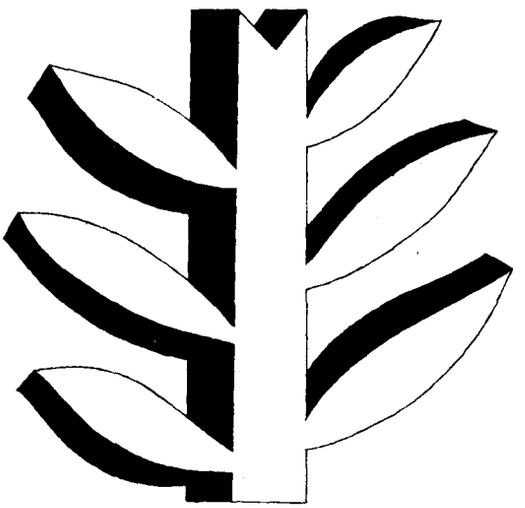
about St. Peter's and the gilded, painted halls of the Vatican, that these buildings house the always authentic voice of the creative principle of a universe of infinitudes. The sceptic can say, "If I had been the Deity, I wouldn't have had any trouble figuring out a more effective way to go about it."

Church as Threat

For all the efforts of Pope John, Vatican II and the agitators of aggiornamento, the church is still part of what St. Paul called the world, the interlocking hierarchies of power which rule mankind, based upon the social lie, which have become not just evil, but an immediate threat to the survival of the human species. Black cardinals, blood in the draft board files, short skirts for nuns, rock masses, situational ethics in the confessional, are not enough. In the world in which we live, any truly religious, much less Christlike, action, must be utterly drastic. The Holy Father has flown to all sorts of places. Why hasn't he flown to Hanoi and from there to Washington? The Vatican is one of the largest capitalistic enterprises on earth. Why hasn't it been totally liquidated since Vatican II? As thousands of pulpit orators have pointed out, Christ advised the rich young man to sell all he had, give to the poor, take up his cross and follow Him, not because riches were necessarily evil or the poor deserving, but because the Apocalypse was coming—the judgment, the fire and the Kingdom—and all excess baggage should be thrown away. Well, Apocalypse is here.

The great issues of faith and morals are remote from the lives of Catholics except sometimes in moments of crisis. The entire structure of Catholic practice as it is lived out in ordinary life is designed to both coerce and protect the individual by the sheer exertion of power—worldly power—and also designed to prevent anything resembling a spiritual crisis arising in the lives of the obedient. Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor was perfectly right. What sort of eschatology is this?

The Grand Inquisitor sounds very noble in the pages of *The Brothers Karamazov,* but in fact what is wrong with the church in its day-to-day life is vulgarity, a vulgarity far more deeply rooted than a taste for pink and blue statuary. The church is supposed to be the custodian of the gospels and the sacraments, a community of love into whose hands has been given the trusteeship of the infinite, the eternal, and the holy in the lives of men. The sacraments are the channels through which the holy enters life and sanctifies it in its most elementary functions—eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, birth, adolescence, vocation, sin and amendment, death—the great rites of passage common to all folk religions. So the ceremonies of the church's seasons are rites of the year, the sanctification of time. Religion in this anthropological sense goes back to the Stone Age. Catholicism is supposed to have preserved it and glorified it. As folk religion suffuses the life of the individual and the community with transcendence, so Catholicism claims to be distinguished from all other organized religions in preserving the old folk religion and charging it in turn with still greater transcendence, the transcendence of the incarnation. Would a visitor from another planet inspecting the actual life of the church as lived corporately and individually find this a plausible claim? Does it look like the incarnation, the at-one-ment, is manifested in the lives of men? Unless he were a being of truly Christian charity the interplanetary visitor would say that the evidence made the claim not implausible but absurd. The best the most devout of us can say living on this planet—in this church—is that the church is the body of Christ, but the body of Christ crucified, in which the promise of the incarnation resides: "Lo, I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world," means only that the holy will always be somehow accessible. It will never be utterly impossible to become a saint. But this can be said of any of the world religions or of purely secular life.



Certainly one thing transcendence is not, as it suffuses immanence, is vulgar. One of the principal signs of Grace is grace. Holiness is graciousness. The sanctified should be noble with the good taste and *courtoisie* of holy gentlemen, like the archangels who are the courtiers of heaven. Does the church foster such personalities? It is terrified of them. When signs of the development of such a personality show themselves in parochial school, the child is suppressed, or if irrepressible, shunted as early as possible into the "religious life," an isolation ward for people infected with prayer.

Anyone who has conducted retreats for a wide variety of people knows that today with the great religious awakening going on outside organized religion, it is far easier to find a sense of the higher forms of prayer in the secular world than it is in the church. Meditation, contemplation, communion, are motor and fuel for many

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thousands of lives never touched by any church. Religion as experience, for most men and women, is accessible only at the price of total rejection of everything they have been taught to identify with religion. This is far more fundamental than the manifestly un-Christian behavior of the church in its relations with the power of the world. No matter how decadent the particular cult, most Buddhists seem to share something of the love of the historic Buddha for all sentient creatures. Islam is saturated in every department of life with Mohammed's sense of utter contingency in the face of the Absolute. Orthodox Judaism sacramentalizes all the details of life with faith made manifest in rite.

Outside of convents, one of the very few corporate groups of Christians who consistently manifest the personality of Jesus Christ are the Quakers. The distinguishing characteristic of the Quakers is their belief that it is comparatively easy to be a Christian. Catholic devotional manuals would indicate that it would be practically impossible without the continuous supernatural aid of the sacrament of penance. Yet to the non-Christians of this world, the characteristic Christian virtues are righteous anger, sexual repression, bigotry, spiritual pride and simple bad taste. It doesn't do to say that it was different in the Middle Ages and that these are bourgeois characteristics. Quakerism is a religion of merchants if ever there was one, and what we call, pejoratively, Puritanism, was far worse in the thirteenth century.

How many Christians ever face the charge that Christianity itself is immoral; not its hypocrisy; not its captivity by the social and sexual lies that hold together an exploitative society; but immoral when it is sincerely true to the Gospel? We are so used to calling the Gospel of St. John the Gospel of Love that we are horrified when the non-Christian points out that it is full of ill-temper, and that its account of the Passion, sung in the most impressive ceremony of the church, is a constant source of anti-Semitism in the world, and of hate in the hearts of its listeners. Such a charge may be true or false, but even the most sophisticated moral apologetic never faces any fundamental moral challenge but contents itself with "answering" Nietzsche or Marx.

What is happening today is the laborious, inchoate struggle to develop such an apologetic. Neo-Thomism had all the answers but we stand outside it and walk around it. Its effectiveness is that of a completely autonomous work of art. One reason I suppose is that Thomism is not really a Christian philosophy as such. It is only in Eastern Orthodoxy that the church, building on the foundation of the Patristic period, has tried to develop a philosophy which would be Christian in its essence. So even today Russian philosophers and theologians like Frank and Berdyaev, once we discover them, seem more relevant than even the most progressive in the West. There is something extraordinarily primitive about Rahner, Küng, Schillebeeckx, Congar, everyone but the Catholic circles influenced by the Paris Russians and by Martin Buber. They seem to be discovering their meanings as they go along. This should make them exciting reading, but it does not. Something seems to drag, impede progress, confuse the issues. Each of the non-essentials of the Catholic religion is let go with the greatest reluctance and then comes creeping back in disguise. It is ridiculous that in the latter end of the 20th century the church should be convulsed over doctrines and practices that are patently false or unnecessary. Even worse is reformation by ukase. Mass in Latin, communion in one kind, celibacy, right down to fish on Friday, should be freely optional, neither enforced nor forbidden. It is this authoritarian temper in aggiornamento itself that only provokes laughter in those who are invited to share in our infallible ecumenicity.

The specifically Roman aspects of Roman Catholicism provoke only hilarity in the theologically informed of other sects so that conversion tends to be an affair of the uninformed or the neurotically driven who above all else must find absolute authority demanding absolute submission.

The term "other sects" is deliberate. Arnold Toynbee is not the only man to have pointed out that the Roman Catholic church had its last chance to become a truly ecumenical world religion at the time of the rites controversy with the Jesuits in China, and threw it away to become just another Western European Christian sect. Sectarianism is not a specialty of Rome among the sacramental and episcopal churches. Orthodoxy is not just ethnocentric, but nationalistic, and Anglicanism for the most part is simply an etherialization of Britishness. True, there has evolved over the past 150 years a remarkably ecumenical concept of Catholicism within the Anglican Church, but it is a movement in the last analysis of individuals. There are probably proportionately just as many Roman Catholics of like mind. Until recently they have not been permitted to speak publicly.

Post-feudal Structure

Over and above all the objections to outrageous and anachronistic doctrine is one which is probably primary and primarily spiritual, although it might seem to be simply a matter of infrastructure. Roman Catholicism says that its very life blood flows in Holy Communion, yet its entire structure is fundamentally anti-communitarian. Power is not spiritual power flowing between communicants but physical power over men and things, in a religion of hypostatized administration. It is not true that this structure is feudal; it is post-feudal. The papacy is the first of the absolute monarchies. It invented the idea, which is the reason for its bitter struggles with its competitors like Philip Augustus and the Hohenstaufen. This utterly anachronistic structure is

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still there, only ever so slightly modified. There are 20th-century forms of authoritarianism, but the College of Cardinals yielding before the demand for collegiality is like a replay of a minor reform in the 10th-century Byzantine court. All this struggle takes place at the top.

Basic are the simple questions: Who owns the churches? Who chooses the clergy? Who disposes of the entire apparatus of infrastructure and its hierarchy of administrators? Not certainly a vestry, a convocation or a presbytery, not the communicants of communion. It is absurd to claim that this structure preserves doctrine and practice. The historic Jesus, the comradeship of the apostles, the *agape* of the apostolic community, is self-evidently more alive in the Society of Friends, whose methods of administration have provided a model for an entire tradition of secular libertarianism and anarchism. Today the secular society likewise is caught in a crisis of administration. The apparatus which governed the mechanical, industrial extractive economy is impossibly inadequate for a technological society. The difference is just a matter of five hundred years. The crisis in the church is a whole historical epoch too late.

These are the items of the indictment of the church, drawn up by the people who are voting with their feet, as well as religious people in the outside world. How can anybody admit all this and still be a Catholic? It isn't hard, but it certainly requires a special temper. Lord Acton, the most intellectually impressive Catholic of the 19th century, is the man who said both, "I have never been troubled by an intellectual doubt," and after Vatican I, when he was asked why he didn't become an Anglican, "Just because the Pope has changed his religion is no reason why I should change mine."

Personal Testament

At this juncture one can only speak personally. I am a Catholic, simply, neither Orthodox, nor Roman, nor Anglican, because the Catholic church has preserved the anthropological, the folk religion, that engendered and nourished Western civilization. These are our own rites of passage and of the year. The church has sheltered, usually with great reluctance during their lifetimes, our mystics and our philosophical theologians, and it has also sheltered, as Baron von Hügel loved to point out, our millions upon millions of saintly common people, that Irish washerwoman dying of cancer with whom von Hügel went to early morning Mass, and her kind.

It enables and even fosters, within narrowly defined limits, communities of prayer, lives dedicated to meditation, contemplation and communion, lives seeking that vision out of which all good works flow. Although as a corporation it defines faith as belief and excludes the disbeliever, it still can nourish faith as life in an age of faithlessness. Religion is something men do, not something they believe. Creeds and dogmas exist only to protect a kind of life, a kind of act. That act culminates in prayer. In Christianity its abiding point of reference is an historic Person, whose acts are most accessible through the communion of his followers. Yet it was Allen Ginsberg who said, "The Sacred Heart is enough." Finally vision becomes habitude and we realize, with St. John of the Cross, that visions are symptoms of the defect of vision, the defect of luxury. Today the church can still provide an ambiance of illumination in which we move like fish in water.

Men stay in the church because they know empirically that the sacraments provide the food and drink of a life of communion and illumination. All the rest is distraction. Simone Weil, who prowled like a hungry animal outside the doors of the church, the visible church of distraction, called it the Great Beast. It is the life that counts, and I for one refuse to be distracted from that life, although I may be sufficiently exasperated in the mundane world by the specific sectarian absurdities of the church. That sacramental life is all one to me—Roman, Orthodox, Anglican, Old Catholic, Polish Catholic, Hussite, Swedish Lutheran. In Paris I go to Saint Severin; in New York to St. Luke's Trinity. I can find other traditions, other sacramentals. I do not agree with the recent fashionable Dominican and Benedictine writers on Buddhism, that Zen, which is all the Buddhism they know, is an inferior thing called "natural mysticism." Natural it may be, but it is far more profound than anything casually encountered in most parish churches or all but a few of religious orders. So likewise for the Vedantists or Quakers or Hasidim.

We are far from having a claim to sole possession of the Inner Light. We can only say that we have never permitted it to completely go out. When the light of contemplation goes out in a society, civilization perishes, usually in catastrophic ruin.

CONTRIBUTORS—SECTION I

KENNETH REXROTH, *novelist, poet and translator, is at work on a study of radical 19th century Christians.*

MICHAEL HARRINGTON *is Chairman of the Board of the League for Industrial Democracy. His books include* The Other America *and* The Democratic Left.

HERBERT RICHARDSON *teaches theology at St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto. He is the author of* Towards an American Theology *and a forthcoming book on the Americanization of sex.*

LESLIE DEWART *is the author of* The Future of Belief *and* The Foundations of Belief, *both published by Herder and Herder.*

FATHER ANSELM ATKINS, *O.C.S.O., a frequent contributor, is writing a doctoral dissertation on theology and literature at Emory University.*

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RELIGION AND REVOLUTION

Tactics are not a function of the eternal

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

How does a Christian relate to politics? How far can a Christian go in support of revolutionary social change?

I prefer to rephrase these questions posed by the editors of *Commonweal* and deal, not simply with Christians, but with all religious people. For, it seems to me, the underlying issue is whether a view of the supernatural implies, or dictates, certain attitudes toward the crises and struggles of this world. In answering, then, one necessarily responds in terms which apply to Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, indeed to all religion.

Given this reformulation, I would reply from my own secular standpoint that religion should inspire political activism and commitment and provide values which are very much relevant to life on this earth, but that it can never be identified with a specific tactic or movement. As a result, the religious person confronted with the choice of political means—whether, let us say, violent revolution is justified—must examine the issue in much the same way as a conscientious atheist of similar, though naturalistic, values. And on this very untheological basis I would conclude that the justified uses of violence in political struggle are very much circumscribed for believer and unbeliever, and for the very same reason.

First of all, let me spell out the notion of religion as inspiration but not as a tactical guide.

I share Marx's respect for the earthly function of religion. In that famous passage which ends with the charge that faith is the opium of the people, the preceding section which is normally not quoted describes how the religious spirit through history has been the most profound source of man's social protest and hope. It was only in the modern age, Marx held, when secular solutions to worldly miseries became possible, that the churches simply became props for the status quo. There was more than a little truth to his insight but it obviously does not accurately describe the social involvement of religious people in recent years. In other words, contrary to Marx's expectation, religion has sometimes continued to play an important, valuable role in the age of science.

The crucial point is not, of course, exactly how right or wrong my favorite German philosopher was on this question. It is simply that I share with him the conviction that one of the profound contributions of religion has been its inspiration to secular action and resistance. I even think that some of the more transcendental theologies—Augustine's, for instance—were also articulating a utopian social spirit in a language appropriate to a given point in time. The quietist God, on the other hand, who is said to create the universe and then let it suffer, has always struck me as unworthy and cruel. And this is true even in the profound images of Him, like Dostoevsky's Christ who opposes any effort to alleviate the misery of the people as blasphemy and atheism. Divinity should be something more than a spectator sport.

But saying this does not imply that theology contains politics. It inspires, it defines values which must be realized in this world, but tactics are not a function of the eternal. It is good that men say, these values of brotherhood and charity have come to me through my religion and I will therefore try to put them into actual practice. But when they add, God has ordained this particular strategy, that is usually the prelude to intolerance and messianism.

When, for instance, a Father Groppi argues that it is his faith which inspired him with the values that caused him to act in such a way as to be jailed, that is exactly to the point. But to the degree that he implies that God is in favor of fighting welfare cuts through sitting in at the legislature, that is quite dangerous for it implies a supernatural legitimacy for a human choice of means to an end. One should remember that in that most political of hagiographies, the voices of Joan of Arc led her to defeat, death and sainthood. Ultimately God was more interested in holiness than in French nationalism.

That is why I think that the decision on how "far" one can go in the support of social change is the same for the religious and the atheist activist: the choice must be made in terms of present politics, not transcendental principles. (The one exception would be the religious pacifist who commits himself to an absolute refusal of violence.) So I do not find it surprising that Jacques Maritain (in more liberal days) and Leon Trotsky (in a fascinating polemic with John Dewey) had essentially the same answer to this question. The means, Maritain said, are the end in the process of becoming. Therefore evil means are not justified by a good end since they cannot possibly lead to it.

And Trotsky wrote, "*Not* all means are permissible. When we say that the end justifies the means, then for us the conclusion follows that the great revolutionary end spurns those base means and ways which set one part of the working class against other parts, or attempt to make

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the masses happy without their participation. . . ." For both Trotsky and Maritain—and for me—the means and the end are not dialectically related. But then applying this generality to the anguished possibilities of a given political situation is not easy and the answer is certainly not given either by theology or atheistic humanism.

Let me give two examples of how I would apply this principle, one concerning the general nature of social change, the other relating to the specific character of this epoch.

The strategy first formulated by Auguste Blanqui—and still among us to this day—called upon a small, dedicated revolutionary elite to save the people from the stupidity with which their rulers had indoctrinated them and then, after the revolution, to instruct them in democratic and free choice. But if one is committed to democratic change, as I am, this simply will not do, for people cannot be dragooned into autonomy. And, as the history of Communism so amply demonstrates, the selfless elite soon develops its own class privileges. Means have become ends.

More generally, I would argue that, in this age, revolutionary violence is only justified—in terms of that dialectical relationship of means and ends—in very limited cases and that it can never have a creative role. In an underground struggle against a fascist (or Communist) regime—anti-Nazism, the struggle against Greek dictatorship, etc.—the brutality of one's opponents may require a counter-violence. But that use of force cannot be an instrument of building a new, and decent, order, and it must always be kept in proportion. All H-bombs, including those supposed to be left wing or freedom-loving, are horribly reactionary.

Martin Luther King, Jr. understood an aspect of the problem which non-pacifists should do well to ponder. He advocated the tactic of non-violence because, he said, the antagonists eventually would have to live with one another and the less hatred, the fewer wounds, the better for the future. I would secularize this insight and apply it to revolution in any advanced societies. For what must now be radically transformed is not the machines themselves, or the title to them, but the human organizations which run them. The great capital of the knowledge economy is not a factory but the enormous productivity of science as applied by men to the creation of goods. But such a system absolutely demands cooperation, consensus and, if it is to have a soul, relations of brotherhood between the producers. One can expropriate a plant with violence, but not men's minds. Therefore the necessary conflict must be prosecuted so as to make possible that final goal and carefully limited violence may defend but never create. And this limit of what is permissible is to be found in the natural order of things even though, for the religious person, it may be corroborated by a revelation.

There is, in short, a great danger and a great potential in the tremendous awakening of the religious-social conscience. The danger is that the inspiration of transcendental values will be identified with particular tactics and that men will claim godly sanction for human strategies. That often leads to denying the rights of others, and even majorities, who have not been favored to hear the supernatural voices. The potential is that religious people will be motivated to commit themselves more and more and will therefore join the atheists in trying to seek human solutions to their common human problems.

ADELYN O'CONNELL, RSCJ

THE PROPHET COMPLAINS IN TIME OF DROUGHT

So it's fire again?
Seeing the fields hard clay,
the charred waste of desert growth
I thought this time
it might be rain.

Yes I remember Moses,
his feet unsandalled,
comforted by warm earth.
And I remember the flaming glory
of that pillared light-house
moving before us across
the desert sea. I know
your taste for fire.

But here there are only ashes
and no wings stirring.
Touching the clay with a dry tongue
I thought this time
it might be
rain.

SR. M. PAULINUS SULLIVAN, IHM

AND WINDS SNOW-WEIGHTED RIDE

Prayer, I have imaged so,
Glistening and white and deep
And drifting still
Through waking hours and sleep.
How long,
O Lord of the Drift,
How long shall prayer
But barely sift
Here where the heart is wide
To Your weather
And winds, snow-weighted ride?

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PROOF OF THE PUDDING

The certainty of God's existence

HERBERT RICHARDSON

"Please write new proof for God—and fast," came the request.

I asked my muse.

"Do it," she said. "God needs a new proof."

"He needs a new proof like you need a new proof," I laughed. "Isn't it pretty silly to try to prove the existence of someone when they're singing in your ear?"

"And God? I suppose He's singing in your ear?"

"Sure. And singing before my eyes and dancing in my feet."

"Listen Herbie. You go on talking like that and they'll lock you up. God is *utterly inexperienceable*. The theologians say you can't hear Him or see Him or touch Him. That's why you've got to prove his existence."

"But what about," I argued, "what the Bible says? Moses and Samuel and John all saw God—whether frontside or back. Samuel heard Him call; Elijah heard Him whisper. And read I John 1:1."

"Don't quote Bible verses to me," saith the muse. "Things are different nowadays. Once upon a time, men could experience God. But they can't anymore. You've got to prove He exists by a logical argument."

"But why not rather give men back those spiritual eyes and ears and hearts so they can experience God again? Why not rather make them superseeing, superhearing, superdancing, superloving beings? Why not give them supernatures rather than some old proof?"

"Oi vey," the muse gasps. "My boy's been reading *Zorba the Greek* again."

THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY:
A Protestant Counterploy

"Ach, ach, mein Gott. How *schuldig,* guilty, and bitchy I feel. That accusing voice inside me thunders *Unrecht, Unrecht.* It says Martin, you've been a bad, bad boy. There must be a very righteous Gott in heaven. Otherwise why would I feel so guilty?"

***Excuse me, Brother Martin. I hear your gut is bothering you again. Would you like a Bromo Seltzer?

"Teufel, Teufel, toil and trouble. Kick that knave in the ass. He's contradicting Saint Paul. What better evidence for The Righteous One than to feel onself to be an unrighteous, guilty, filthy rag!"

***What better evidence? Well, Brother Martin, we have a few proofs from Saint Thomas. For example. . . .

"BLASPHEMY. BLASPHEMY. Another BLASPHEMY from philosophy. Proofs for God have never saved men. You've got to make them feel guilty. Preach the law to them. That's the Christian way. Now tell the nut who's writing this article to ring down the curtain before I die."

Curtain Curtain. Applause from John Osborne

"What's next?" I asked the muse.

"Just give them the lecture and get the thing over with. We don't want to be late for the dance."

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

History shows that belief in God does not presuppose any philosophical proof for God's existence. Primitive men, like Zorba the Greek, have a direct experience of divinity about them.

But history also shows that belief in the spiritual potentialities of human intelligence—the belief that the highest end of man is communion with God—exists only where it is affirmed that man, by his reason, can know God. While belief in God does not presuppose any "proof," belief in the spiritualization of man does.

A proof for God is a valid inference from premises that are certain. Through such a proof, we demonstrate that God's existence is no less certain than that of some other fact of which we are sure.

For example, one proof for God begins with the certainty of our experience that things vary with respect to quantity and quality. From this premise—of which we are sure—it goes on to demonstrate the existence of One Thing that is greater than all other existing things. If the logic of the proof is correct, we can be as certain that this Greatest Being exists as we are certain that any thing about us is greater or less than anything else.

In proofs for God, the certainty of God's existence is totally dependent upon and never greater than the certainty of the fact taken as the proof's premise. This means that all the proofs for God presuppose that men are more

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certain about their own existence and the existence of things about them than they are of the existence of God. For this reason, the proofs are an indirect way of affirming human autonomy and the substantiality of man's own being. Seeing that this is indirectly implied in them, many religious persons have even attacked them as "atheistic." For when a man says "*I* can prove that *God* exists," he is saying a very bold thing.

In terms of their psychological meaning, the proofs must be seen as man's own effort to establish the spirituality—that is, the absolute universality and limitlessness—of his reason. In terms of their historical meaning, the proofs must be seen as Christian discoveries both of reason's intrinsic power and of its potentialities for spiritualization. For a proof shows not simply that God exists, but that human reason "reaches" to God. A proof shows that there is something spiritual about man's knowing and, hence, man's ultimate destiny. The Catholic church, because of its coaffirmation that man possesses an independent created being and yet is destined for divinization, has therefore affirmed that a valid proof of God is possible in principle. Such a proof is implied within its coaffirmation about man's nature and end.

The classical proofs for the existence of God have not been overthrown by modern philosophical criticism. Rather, modern philosophers have recast them in refutable form and then denied their validity. This was Kant's method in his *Critique*. He refuted "the cosmological argument," but shows no sign that he even read Saint Thomas' classic statement of this proof. But why debate the point? I herewith offer $100.00 to anyone who will name an existing publication that provides a complete textual exegesis of Thomas' *tertia via* which also shows why *this* argument is invalid.

The difficulty with the classical proofs is not that they are invalid, but that they presuppose a non-social and non-processive notion of human understanding. In fact, the entire theological work of Teilhard could be read as an extended argument for God, the Omega Point. The modern proofs for God—the proofs of Peirce, Royce, Hartshorne, and Lonergan—all prove not simply the existence of God as an independent being, but His existence as the principle of purposive evaluation and community within which man finds his ultimate fulfillment. That is, they are reoriented in order to bring into fuller focus man's essential sociality and the fulfillment of that sociality in the one, holy, universal community which Christians call the "church."

We do not really know what we need to know

THE FACT OF DEATH

LESLIE DEWART

Karl Barth will long be remembered for many achievements. But perhaps not the least among these was having first called attention to some of the subtler forms of idolatry which man can devise when he is no longer satisfied with the grosser ones—when, for example, sophistication takes the fun out of the worship of wood and stone. Man has fashioned for himself, Barth insisted, increasingly spiritual idols. The latest stage of this development is that idolatry which makes faith and religion themselves the objects of worship. And yet, he recalled, the Christian faith is not a faith in religion, or a faith in faith: it is a faith in nothing but God.

Somewhat the same assertions that Barth made of faith could also be made of hope. The Christian hope is essentially a hope in God. Indeed, the Christian hope is supposed to be a hope in nothing but God. And yet, there is reason to wonder whether hope in God has not frequently been replaced by what amounts to a hope in hope itself. We may well ask whether the real hope of Christians, the hope actually fostered by the Church, has not tended to base its expectation of the advent of a human future whose meaningfulness shall not be destroyed by death—that is, its expectation of the advent of the Kingdom of God—upon man's ability, by his own natural power, to bring such future about. Of course, we do not usually put it in these bald terms. Yet, that is precisely what we do when we base our Christian hope upon a belief in the immortality of man.

Part of the reason why we are not readily aware that belief in human immortality may be difficult to reconcile with hope in the Christian God is that our belief in immortality is not sufficiently clear-headed to begin with. We do effectively believe in the immortality of man; we actually believe that we are immortal. But we are also aware that the factuality of dying must be reckoned with. It would be simpleminded to assert bluntly that death has no reality at all. So, we find a means to assert effectively that death has no reality at all, but without putting this assertion to ourselves in terms so unequivocal and clear that we would have to realize the full import of our belief. In other words, we find a means to maintain the effective belief that we are immortal, while at the same

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time admitting that man dies, by interpreting death as the mere appearance of death. We maintain in every essential respect the belief that we do not really die, by reducing death to an event in man's life which, on the surface, looks like the death of man, though in reality it is not.

In this manner, the confident expectation that death shall not have the power to destroy all human things may be upheld, even by the Christians, if the full reality of death is denied surreptitiously. It is only the body that dies, we say. To be sure, death must be reckoned with, insofar as it is an unpleasant event, an unavoidable evil episode in human life. We must willy-nilly put up with death; we must go through with it. But when we go through with it, we go through it—that is, we emerge (or, at any rate, the best part of us emerges) unscathed on the other side of death. For the human soul is by nature incorruptible. Though man may not have within himself the power to ensure his happiness after death, at least his existence—and, therefore, his freedom—will be eternally his own. Man may need to look to God for the procurement of pleasure or the avoidance of pain after death—but not in order to find human existence meaningful despite the certainty of death. In short, death may harass man, and God may be usefully courted: but death cannot actually conquer human nature. The doctrine of the natural immortality of the human soul ultimately implies precisely this: that man needs no God to help him overcome death's threat over the meaningfulness of life.

Death and the Gospel

Oscar Cullman is the best known among the scholars who have studied the New Testament with this problem in mind. One need not agree with Cullman's findings, however, nor approach the history of the Christian tradition with an expert's eye, to observe that although the gospel message deals with the problem of death, and although it necessarily involves some suitable interpretation of human mortality, the gospel message is not identifiable with any given interpretation of the nature of death—least of all with a denial of its utter and perplexing reality. It is true that Christian belief has always implied the expectation that somehow, despite the prospect of death as the outcome of life, human existence—and the Christian faith—remain meaningful and worthwhile, by virtue of God's presence and self-gift to man. That is, Christian belief in God engenders hope in God. And the "somehow" requires a reasonable interpretation. But when any interpretation of death begins to militate against hope itself, it is time to reinterpret death rather than to give up hope.

It is historically understandable if the first Christian interpretation of death, using elements already present in Judaism, was the relatively simple doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It is equally understandable if the hellenization of Christianity led to the more sophisticated idea that man's bodily resurrection is to be understood as an event that is superimposed upon the natural immortality of the soul. But the stagnation of Christian doctrine at this level has become even more inexpedient, especially in modern times. It is not that the Christian

hope has become unreasonable, or that it is less easily inspired in the breast of man today than in the past. The difficulty is that the classical theological interpretation of death has gradually exhibited intellectual and religious weaknesses. This is why contemporary Christian thought needs to recast the Christian hope in the light of a more adequate understanding of the nature of death.

The objections to the traditional interpretation of death are, in the first place, of a religious nature. This interpretation, which may have marked great theological and spiritual progress at one time, has gradually revealed its basic incompatibility with the Christian faith, the Christian hope, and even Christian morality. For the interpretation of death as the separation of corruptible body and incorruptible soul has been predicated upon a certain concept of man which is, in turn, necessarily connected with epistemological and metaphysical doctrines which are a function of the Greek belief in Fate. It is not by chance that the idea of God as the administrator of a "divine plan" and as the executioner of man's destiny has proliferated in Christendom. Most frequently the Christian otherworldliness which stems from ultimate concern with the ultimate value of "the eternal salvation of one's immortal soul" has but thinly disguised a profound, self-righteous contempt for the created world of life and

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death. And a more or less conscious historical determinism, justifying itself as submission to "God's will," has pervaded Christian thought (and action) for a thousand years and more. All this despite the Christian expectation, which looks upon the future as a permanent possibility for the exercise of human creativity—that is, as a possibility which always remains radically open to novelty by virtue of the historical presence of God to man.

The philosophical objections can be yet more briefly summarized. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul presupposes an anthropology in which man is, in the first place, composed of body and soul. But this in turn presupposes an epistemology in which cognition is reduplicative of reality, and a metaphysics in which reality as such is constituted by intelligibility. It presupposes, in a word, the entire basic structure of Greek, Scholastic and early modern philosophical thought. A theology of hope based upon the interpretation of death as the separation of body and soul is only slightly less anachronistic than a fundamentalist reading of the siege of Jericho.

An adequate reinterpretation of death today would have to take account of the two key observations which define the problem of death (and it is *that,* the problem of *death,* not of immortality). The first is that death is real, that death is the termination of the possibilities open to human nature and life. (I am reminded of a story, first told to me by Arthur Gibson about a man who in crossing a graveyard reads the epitaph: Not Dead, But Sleeping. His comment: "He ain't foolin' no one but himself!"). The second fact, however, is that consciousness cannot experience non-experience. Man may die, but he cannot experience death—which is why death, which need not be in the least frightening, will probably always remain essentially puzzling. Any valid interpretation of mortality must be faithful to both these empirical facts. It would be as stultifying to suppose that the finality of death contradicts the reality of human consciousness, the obtrusive presence of man to himself, the irresistible self-creativity of human nature, as it would be to suppose that the real aspirations of human consciousness can be realized without undergoing the utter, stark reality of death.

Thus, the situation in which Christian thought can speculate today about this problem is this: we know that man dies, but we do not really know what death is. This is not, of course, a satisfactory situation. But it may be better to admit to ourselves that we do not really know what we need to know in order to give an adequate conceptual form to the Christian hope in our time, than mistakenly to think that we already know what in reality we do not.

FORTY-FOUR THESES

On God, Man, Death, Theology, the Church, Money, Moderate Liberalism and Revolution from 'Through the looking Glass'

COMPILED BY ANSELM ATKINS

GOD

And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?

There were three chairs at the head of the table.

I feel somehow as if I was getting invisible—

MAN

Its body is made of plum-pudding, its wings of holly-leaves and its head is a raisin burning in brandy.

Let's fight till six, and then have dinner.

What do you suppose is the use of a child without any meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning—

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I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite!

O frabjous day.

The more head-downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things.

He was dressed in white paper.

DEATH

I don't belong to this railway journey at all. . . .

"And what does *it live on?*"
"Weak tea with cream in it."

A new difficulty came into Alice's head. "Supposing it couldn't find any?" she suggested.
"Then it would die, of course."
"But that must happen very often," Alice remarked thoughtfully.
"It always happens," said the Gnat.

I feel faint—Give me a ham sandwich.

I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite.

THEOLOGY

I had such a quantity of poetry said to me, all about fishes!

I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite.

She didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.

The books are something like our books, only the words go the wrong way.

That's a great deal to make one word mean, Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

She was getting a little giddy with so much floating in the air.

I meant by "impenetrability" that we've had enough of that subject.

THE CHURCH

I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite.

The snoring got more distinct every minute.

"I never ask advice about growing," Alice said indignantly.

I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join.

It's more like a cork-screw than a path!

THE CURIA

Alice was very anxious to be of use.

Nurse! Do let's pretend that I'm a hungry hyena, and you're a bone!

It writes all manner of things that I don't intend.

We *can* talk, when there's anybody worth talking to.

Curtsy while you're thinking what to say. It saves time.

On this occasion the kitten only purred: and it was impossible to guess whether it meant "yes" or "no."

Do wake up, you heavy things.

I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite!

MODERATE LIBERALISM

However fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything.

If only I knew which was neck and which was waist.

The Anglo-Saxon attitudes only get more extraordinary every moment, while the great eyes rolled wildly from side to side.

Another Rule of Battle, that Alice had not noticed, seemed to be that they always fell on their heads; and the battle ended with their both falling off in this way, side by side.

I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite!

I sent to them again to say

"It will be better to obey."

REVOLUTION

Somebody killed *something*: that's clear, at any rate—

She thought she had never seen such a strange-looking soldier in all her life.

She's in that state of mind, said the White Queen, that she wants to deny *something*—only she doesn't know what to deny!

I'm glad they've come without waiting to be asked. I should never have known who were the right people to invite!

Here we go round the mulberry bush.

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2. CRISIS IN THE CHURCH *A hard look at where we are and, hopefully, where we are going in the years ahead.*

CRISIS OR KAIROS?

Beneath the symptoms are fundamental historical shifts

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM

The Roman Catholic church is in multiple crisis. Whether the crisis is also an opportune moment in the evolution of religious experience remains to be seen. The crisis is bare fact; the *kairos* pure hope. And the hope is willful unless it be grounded in the fact.

The Roman Catholic crisis is most easily described in terms of symptoms. Received dogma is questioned by some and charitably ignored by others. The hierarchy is ridiculed, and the pope along with the papacy denigrated. Ordained priests leave to marry, and married couples practice contraception. Newman centers (no longer clubs) are for the most part empty, even for folk masses, while women students on Catholic campuses demand education in the use of birth control, a course that one gathers is increasingly needed. In the parishes, the number receiving communion is up but confessions continue to shrink. The weekly recital of the symptoms of crisis, once largely confined to the *National Catholic Reporter,* can now be found in the *Brooklyn Tablet.* The latest synod, which the Vatican designed to be tame, broke into controversy the moment Cardinal Suenens began to speak.

The symptoms of crisis are important. They cause pain, and whether it be felt by the pope or by Bishop Shannon, by Jacques Maritain or by Hans Küng, by the new generation or by the old, the pain is no cause for rejoicing. On the other hand, exclusive concentration on alleviating the symptoms of crisis is dangerous, as critics of American foreign policy have demonstrated. Mary Daly is right when she insists that women should be ordained to the priesthood. But meeting that demand will change nothing, any more than the ordination of married men will cure the ills that beset clerical life. Perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of immediately ordaining women and married men is that the question would no longer engage energy that would be better directed elsewhere.

Beneath the symptoms of Roman Catholic crisis are fundamental historical shifts certainly in the life of the West, probably in the life of the entire world. It is in terms of four of these underlying causes that I think we can most usefully take the measure of the crisis that threatens the church as we have known it and discern at least some outlines of hope. That hope is not facile, however, nor should it be. Beneath the symptoms of crisis lies death, and it is often the death of old values, values that it will be difficult to do without. To cast them off without mourning, leaving them to be buried by the dead while we leap full-blown into the future would be inauthentic, just as it would be inauthentic to pretend that those things that have died or are dying are in fact filled with life. We cannot have resurrection unless we admit the crucifixion.

1. *Organizational Religion in Organizational Society.* The great historical contribution of the Roman church to the life of the West has been organizational. From the fall of Rome through the Middle Ages it can claim to have been the religious and secular organizational principle of western Europe. It is fashionable these days to see in organizational Catholicism little more than a progressive fall from grace; the medieval Christ gave no sermons on the Mount—he was too busy leading Crusades—and his vicars, having tasted the supposedly sour fruits of the world, found them sweet.

All its faults conceded, however, the medieval church must be credited with the courage to enter the secular city and transform its state of anarchy into a civilization of no small value. Like all organizations, unfor-

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tunately, the church had to be forced to give up its secular role; as the nation-states acquired competence and learning gained autonomy, the church staged a holding action: in the best of all possible worlds, it would still be the one, true organizer of meaningful life, and its professionals the arbiters of all human thought and action. The papal triumph at Trent was capped by the declaration of papal infallibility at Vatican I. The appeal of the church for such men as Manning lay in its being a total organization, one whose members could live with the security that each detail of their lives could be worked out with the certainty that so long as Rome was followed nothing could go seriously wrong. To enter the church was to enter a system, and the idea delighted many.

The church undoubtedly met a need in the lives of men who were otherwise exempt from membership in large organizations. But today the typical individual in the West lives out his life cycle in organizational terms. The child enters the school organization—and for recreation joins the Boy Scouts. Having finished school, he goes into the army—and when released, he becomes one of General Motors' 500,000 employees. Meanwhile, he is dealing with the telephone company, hoping to be worthy of a Diner's Club card, paying a substantial percentage of his income to the Federal government, and shopping at a supermarket chain. Women escape at least some of the organizations in which men are compelled to participate, but they most of them must marry organizational men—and discover, if their husbands are successful, that a major concern of the modern company, is the effects of his wife on her husband's performance.

Organization is a drug on the Western market. And religious organization has long been one of the visible marks of the Roman Catholic church. Vatican II was for the most part a commendable attempt to modernize the organization: instead of one Latin liturgy it tried to organize a single more relevant liturgy; instead of authoritarian religious orders it called for their more democratic organization; instead of papal solitude it proclaimed collegiality. But the Council did not—psychologically, perhaps, it could not—address itself to the larger question of the extent to which large-scale religious organization meets current religious and secular needs.

It would be foolish to expect the organizational church to declare itself not the church—though it is not the church—but an organization in service of the churches, that is, the autonomous but related communities of those who share Christian faith. On the other hand, that is exactly what is happening to the organizational church. The Glenmarys asked only that the organization be of service to them as they pursued their chosen task and, when the church refused, they de-registered. Much the same seems to be happening with the IHM's. Lay people, of course, have traditionally been in the position of using the organization as a religious service, if that is what they

Worship

If the sacrament of penance is to be revitalized, there must be a searching attempt to understand the problem in all its complexity. What are the basic truths about penance that have been forgotten? What contemporary theological insights into sin, conversion, and worship will affect the experience of the sacrament? What is to be the future rite and how will the communitarian, ecclesial, and cosmic elements find expression there? What of the Eucharist as forgiveness of sin? What can presently be done in renewal of the sacrament of reconciliation? What has recent theological literature to say on these problems?

These are some of the questions Charles E. Curran investigates in three articles on "The Sacrament of Penance Today," beginning with the November 1969 issue of *Worship*. The second and third articles in this series will be published in the December and January numbers.

President of the Catholic Theological Society of America and associate professor of moral theology in the Catholic University, Washington, D.C., Fr. Curran is author of *Christian Morality Today* and *A New Look at Christian Morality*, editor of *Absolutes in Moral Theology*, and coauthor of the forthcoming *Dissent in and for the Church* and *The Responsibility of Dissent: The Church and Academic Freedom*.

Accompanying his first installment in the November *Worship*, will be articles by John Jay Hughes, writing of the "Eucharistic Sacrifice: Transcending the Reformation Deadlock," and John Navone on "Remembering and Worship."

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wished. (*Commonweal*'s forty-five years could be interpreted in these terms.) The same option is now being exercised by religious professionals, and many of the symptoms of crisis I mentioned earlier are functions of that fact.

2. *The Cosmological Revolution.* Bishop Robinson and William Hamilton may not tell us much about God but they tell us a great deal about the breakdown of the old cosmology: what is being described in the death of God is the shattering of hierarchies. The supernatural over the natural, the Aristotelian God over the universe, the bishop over his flock, the pope over the entire church —all these vertical images once commanded the Western imagination. The hierarchical imagination transformed Christian fellowship into the organizational church, priesthood and ministry into superior states in life, the Eucharistic meal into an unbloody sacrifice offered at the high altar. Its achievements were great, for it is the vertical imagination that informs the Gothic cathedral, the *Divine Comedy,* and of course the Roman Mass, which no experimental liturgy has yet equalled.

The hierarchical imagination, however, is less and less the imagination of modern man at his most creative. Its cosmology does not work for us. This does not mean we cannot respond to Chartres, but that we cannot build it; that we cannot respond to the theology of Aquinas but that we cannot do it. No one is doing anything better, yet. But we cannot do otherwise than exercise our creativity within the cosmology that seems to be emerging. This cosmology is horizontal: it is the cosmos of abstract art and of the cinema, and of Samuel Beckett and the rock sensibility, of our *kitsch* and our culture.

The Roman Catholic tradition at its best is the reverse, a triumph of the vertical imagination. The Franciscan movement—the one great medieval experiment in horizontality—was recreated to fit a vertical cosmos before its founder's death; and had it not been, it would probably not have outlived him. Up to now the more effective religious orders have been those of Dominic and Loyola, just as the great monastic centers of spirituality have not been communes but charismatic hierarchies. There is no denying the fruitfulness of the old cosmology. That is not the point. We live off it and will continue to live off it. But, I suspect, we cannot be religiously creative if we confine our imaginations to it.

Equally important, the moment men move out of the old cosmology, received structures are threatened. I have several times been present when a priest was for the first time celebrant at an experimental liturgy. In each case, the priest asked the same question: what was the need for an ordained priest? In some instances, I tried to be reassuring, but a frank answer would have been that so far as I could tell, an ordained priest was necessary only because the community was not prepared to do without one. The answer does not imply that liturgical groups should eliminate a role for an ordained priest, but that this is where liturgical experiment, an effort of the horizontal imagination, seems to lead.

That the cosmological revolution puts tremendous strain on those involved in the organizational church needs no emphasis. The religious role played by pope, bishop or priest was created by the vertical imagination. He cannot but experience the revolution as anything other than a rejection of his identity. And he is perfectly right when he feels that the achievements thus far of the experimental church are small next to those of the traditional church. Even the most effective priest-radicals—Groppi, Berrigan—are effective chiefly because of their membership in the priestly caste.

The hope for religious professionals may be the New Testament, which Joseph Dixon, Jr. (whose terminology and insights I have been borrowing shamelessly), points out is a work of the horizontal imagination. But the problem is massive. The change implied by the shift from vertical to horizontal as a way of life is as great or greater than that which followed Galileo. But unless the change is made, it is difficult to see how religious creativity can be possible within Roman Catholicism.

3. *The Broken Image.* Religion and science may have been at war for three hundred years but they shared an image of reality that no longer holds: "The scientific world view," Floyd W. Matson writes in *The Broken Image,* "which has been identified for three centuries with the names of Galileo and Newton . . . looked upon an infinite universe of perfect symmetry and absolute precision. It was, in fact, nothing less than the image of the Great Machine." If Roman Catholics would have rejected the mechanical metaphor, they would not have rejected the world's symmetry and precision, its ultimate translucence and ability to yield certain knowledge to the rational mind. Even the existence of God himself, Vatican I claimed, could be proved incontrovertibly to the truly rational man.

The methods and conclusions were different but the benefits of science and of the church were the same: both yielded certitude and certitude was a supreme value. Since the church added to the results of analytic intelligence and guarantees of divine revelation its certitudes were even greater than those of science. We are eternally indebted to Newman and those few like him who continued to insist that religious certitude differed from assent to mathematical propositions.

Our century has destroyed scientific certitude. But it has also done more: certitude in the conventional meaning is no longer a supreme value. Man is learning to live with the contingency of his perceptions, and he is learning that to look for certitude is to set out on a false quest. The demand is not for a system that provides life with certitude but for a way that provides it with energy and meaning.

Yet the Roman church, as John J. McDermott points out in *The American Angle of Vision,* has predominantly

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been the religion of truth rather than experience, that is, in this context, of certitude rather than the way. Sociologically, of course, there has been a way—a life style—but in its self-understanding the church has articulated its sure access to certain truth as one of its distinguishing marks. Its popes have had to give answers that are true—yes, the Blessed Virgin is body and soul in heaven; no, you may not use contraceptives—and it has been assumed that those answers must stand for all time. But now the pope lives in a world that may have nostalgia for Eternal Truths but knows it must survive without them. Thus, when Pope Paul issued his creed for the year of faith, it largely fell on deaf ears. Some Catholics rejected it but most ignored it; it did not meet their religious needs.

4. *The Pluriformity of Belief.* Churches in the past have looked into the hierarchy of believing communities and always found themselves at the top. The Jews were *the* chosen people and "one, true Church" was taken to mean that Roman Catholicism was the only real church. Further, they have defined themselves through their enemies: the early Christians were quick to discover the children of darkness over against whom they were the children of light. Judaeo-Christianity could not be long-lived.

Vatican II was able to make a tentative beginning at the official acceptance of pluriformity. It could acknowledge some partial reality in the Protestant churches and proclaim its origins in Judaism. From the organizational point of view, this was a great—and as the prolonged debates indicate, painful—step forward. It made it permissible to hold what the average American, for example, had already concluded from experience: the salvation of the good Jew and the good Protestant was mediated through their religious communities.

During recent years, however, the pluriformity of belief has been redefined for the consciousness of the Christian. Catholic and Jew acknowledge the Hebrew scriptures; Protestant and Catholic acknowledge Christ. But it is another matter to accept seriously the global religious phenomenon. The Roman Catholic's community of faith is less and less absolutized as it is forced to understand itself in relationship to Communism, to Buddhism, to Islam. The Catholic assumption of the more distant past was that Holy Writ and Holy Church were normative of religious belief. More recently, the normative moment of religious history has been found in Christ, with Catholicism believing in its own primary fidelity to him. Now being forced into Roman Catholic awareness is the question of what it means, on a global scale, to claim that Christ is the norm. What then, to give just one example, of Buddha? At one time, I would have had a simple answer. Now, I am aware that I know too little of Buddha to give any answer at all. But my Roman Catholic faith is conditioned by that ignorance. And the new attractiveness of Eastern religions to the

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young suggests that the church will have to live with a far more radical—and humble—pluriformity in the future.

More immediate is the question of the unbeliever within the specifically Christian community. Should New York's Emmaus House refuse to share an agape meal with an acknowledged agnostic? Should a group of Catholic women make acceptance of Christ a condition of membership? The total church will have to deal with the fact that many experimental communities do include unbelievers in their celebrations and that without fanfare one organization of Catholic women recently decided that Christian faith could not be made a test of membership.

As I reread what I have written, I realize the inadequacy of my rhetoric. Though I claimed to see the death of real values in our historical moment, the fact of that death is obscured by the style. I will conclude with the only possible justification for that inadequacy: a church whose organization is a service to religious experience, that is based on non-hierarchical friendship in faith, that can acknowledge its own uncertainty yet offer the possibility of a meaningful way, that can relate itself to a global vision of man in relationship to ultimate concern—such a church will suffer but will also lead to a New Jerusalem, a city of man and God without walls or barricades.

CONTRIBUTORS—SECTION II

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM *is an editor of* Cross Currents, *and of the symposia* What Modern Catholics Think about Birth Control *(Signet) and* Cross Currents of Psychiatry and Catholic Morality *(Pantheon; Meridian).*

ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN *is the author of* Observer in Rome, The Spirit of Protestantism, *and the recent* The Ecumenical Revolution *(Anchor; Image).*

MARY DALY, *author of* The Church and the Second Sex *(Harper & Row), is a member of the theology department at Boston College.*

DOROTHY DAY, *author of* The Long Loneliness *and* House of Hospitality *is Editor of* The Catholic Worker.

EUGENE FONTINELL, *chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Queens College, CUNY, is the author of the forthcoming* Toward a Reconstruction of Religion: A Philosophical Probe *(Doubleday).*

DAN HERR, *president of the Thomas More Association, is publisher of and a regular columnist for* The Critic.

MONSIGNOR GEORGE G. HIGGINS *is Director of the Division for Urban Life, Department of Social Development, the United States Catholic Conference.*

ROSEMARY RUETHER, *author of* The Church Against Itself *(Herder and Herder), is a member of the faculty at Howard University.*

GARRY WILLS, *author of the forthcoming* Nixon Agonistes *(Houghton, Mifflin), teaches at Johns Hopkins.*

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Questions & Answers & Questions & Answers

MARY DALY ON THE CHURCH

Q. In this period of change and crisis, how do you find yourself relating to the church?

A. The question of how one relates to the church is necessarily ambiguous because of the ambiguity implied in the word "church." What is the reality we are trying to talk about? Even leaving aside the widest connotations, I might ask whether you mean Christianity or that part of Christianity we call the Catholic church. However, I am assuming that the ambiguity was recognized and intended by the questioners.

One way of expressing the shift in consciousness experienced by some of us would be to say that some time ago we came to recognize existentially the fallacy of taking the part for the whole and, having seen through it, cannot go back to the old distorted perspective. To put it in McLuhanish terms, we have changed our environment. One doesn't really recognize his environment for what it is while he is in it (a fish does not discover water), but only when it has become his old environment. Once Catholicism is seen as a part of Christianity one has in a sense moved "outside" that environment called Catholicism.

Yet the situation is complex. Moving "outside" does not necessarily mean leaving. When James Pike described himself as an alumnus of his church, the expression conveyed the fact that he was not severing all relation to it, but rather establishing an adult relationship to it. To pursue the analogy, alumni are in fact what an institution of learning is intended to produce—not perpetual students. So also the point of the church is not to foster religious infantilism. A literalist's manner of relating to the Catholic substance or a traditionalist's manner of relating to Catholic tradition is not an adult relationship and is impossible to sustain authentically once a sense of relativity and an ability to recognize myth as myth have been acquired, since one has then moved out of the "old environment" of Catholic fundamentalism. Going back would be something analogous to the act of one who would refuse graduation from a university, preferring to retain his undergraduate status permanently. The nature of this outside-inside relationship to Catholicism or to any institutional religion is obscure because faith itself involves unclarity. I am not talking about faith understood as assent to a series of propositions on the authority of "God," the Scriptures, or the church. That idea of faith—which has a false clarity—has been used to separate the true believers from the heretics, the sheep from the goats, by the magic of identifying words with the reality they only dimly reflect. The faith I am talking about is a state of ultimate concern. It does not exclude doubt but contains doubt in its depths. Paradoxically, for this reason it carries with it a clear recognition that there is no sharp distinction between insiders and outsiders, Catholics and non-Catholics, Christians and non-Christians. This clarity about the fact of unclarity is a dizzying experience.

It may happen, of course, that one may come to decide that the existing structures of Catholicism are so alienating and dysfunctional that the social reality called "the Catholic church" must be rejected. This appears to be the case with someone like Charles Davis. Although I respect this position and am more in sympathy with this honest criticism than with official Catholicism, I am not sure that it is radical enough. The basic problem with this stance is the isolation and ineffectiveness to which those who adopt it seem to be doomed. For my part I am still willing to work in my own way (lazily) at a mutually transforming confrontation with my own heritage, still being naive enough to think that in some sense I can win.

ROBERT McAFEE BROWN ON REFORM

Q. "How do your views on reform in the church compare with those you held five or ten years ago?"

A. My views on reform in the church have changed both in relation to timetable and substance.

My timetable a decade, or even half a decade ago, was considerably more leisurely than it is now. I looked for slow, careful, cautious moves from within church structures, drawing together whatever consensus was achievable at a given time between bishops, priests and laymen, so that decade by decade solid renewal could take place, each step carefully building on the preceding one, looking always to The Long View, generations hence.

I am no longer content with the thought that a few generations hence the church may begin to look more like what it always should have. I think in terms of months rather than decades, and feel that waiting for "God's good time" results only in supporting the maxim, "Don't rock the boat." Boat-rocking, I am now convinced, is necessary, and since I don't think the boat will sink ("the gates of hell shall not prevail . . ."), I applaud and want to participate in speeding up the timetable.

The reasons for this new impatience are several: (a) Pope John and Vati-

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can II convinced me that reform could proceed more briskly than my impressions of the pre-Johannine, pre-conciliar church had seemed to warrant. (b) Events since the Council, when the pace has slowed down, have convinced me that unless pressure is maintained, nothing will happen save reversion to the past. Reform will come in spite of hierarchies, not because of them. (c) The pace of the world revolution has shown me that mankind does not have the luxury of infinite amounts of time to repair injustices within the human family, and that the church unreformed is irrelevant even to sheer human survival. (d) I have seen too many people I love being crushed and destroyed by the slowness of present reform to be willing to settle for anything save the speediest attempts to overhaul the church before all of them have to leave it in order to preserve their personal integrity and wholeness.

As far as the substantive issues are concerned, I initially approached them from a strictly theological perspective. I was concerned about papacy, Mary, Scripture and tradition, authority. I was also concerned about "Catholic power," birth control and religious liberty, but I felt that these problems would take care of themselves as the theological issues were faced. Today, I see the matter almost in reverse. I see papacy and authority in the light of the need for the church to project the image of servant to the world, and suffering servant at that. And I see that before the theological issues have been fully rethought, substantial gains can be made in such areas as religious liberty (thanks to the Council), and birth control (no thanks to *Humanae Vitae*). I now foresee that dealing resolutely with the latter issues will force us to deal more radically with the former ones. It is birth control that is re-defining the understanding of papal authority, and not the other way round.

Finally, I have discovered that the "differences" between Catholicism and Protestantism don't worry me much any more. So much water has gone over the theological dam, and so much dogmatic debris has followed the same route, that our task today is not to articulate our faith *vis-à-vis* one another, but to rethink the faith we already share with one another *vis-à-vis* the whole non-Christian world. It will be our "secular" involvements together that will give us the tools to work out a new understanding of Christian faith for our day. In this fashion we can, together, fulfill the mandate of *Gaudium et Spes*, to hear the voice of God in the voice of the times.

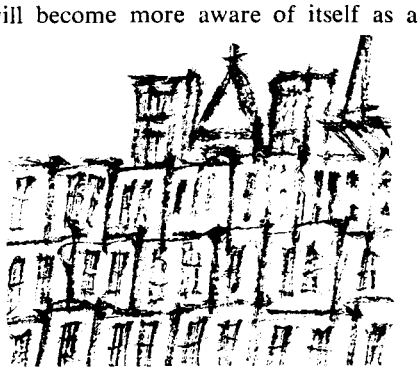
EUGENE FONTINELL ON THE FUTURE

Q. Where do you think the church is headed?

A. Strictly speaking, the church is not "headed" anywhere. Unlike a train or an automobile, the church is not a reality which is moving toward some pre-set, objectifiable goal or destination. The linear metaphor implicit in the term "headed" is inappropriate for such complex, multi-relational, self-creating realities as man and the church. If, however, we ask "what is the church becoming?," we imply a "field" metaphor which expresses the relational and processive features of reality. Such a substitution of questions is not an abstract, technical philosophical endeavor, since what the church will become will be influenced to no small degree by the metaphors and concepts which we employ in describing it. Further, the response of a member of the church to the question "What is the church becoming?" will not be the guess of an Olympian observer but will instead be an expression of faith and hope.

The future belongs to those who take responsibility for it, but we now know that responsibility is possible only when men exercise freedom and creativity. Man has come to recognize that he is, to some extent, responsible for the creation of himself and the world. In like fashion, the church is coming to acknowledge that its mission is not to imitate passively some eternal plan in the mind of God but rather to share in the risky business of creating the world. But such awareness is not achieved without paying a price, as is already strikingly manifest in the sense of meaninglessness which permeates so much of the contemporary world. Understandably there will be various efforts to overcome the seemingly nihilistic implications of a world without any fore-ordained meaning. Witness, for example, the current vogue of magic, the increased interest in Eastern religions, the attraction of a romanticized revolutionism, the resurgence of superpatriotism and the cry for that "old time religion." I do not intend to equate all these efforts but simply cite them as evidence of the indispensability of some meaning structure for *human* existence.

The church as a "meaning structure" will become more aware of itself as a



community symbolizing and giving a specific expression to man's hopes and desires. However, it will become increasingly pluralistic holding together a variety of viewpoints, ways of living and articulations of its faith and vision. The church will less and less seek its continuity in particular structures, doctrines or theologies—though it will embody all of these in much more sophisticated, subtle and dynamic forms than now exist. The church will come to recognize that its distinct mission is to be a living experiment for mankind, continually witnessing to the mystery of the existential, developing relationship between man and God. The diverse forms which this witness takes will depend on the creative imagination of the

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members of the church. It is already evident, however, that the institutions, doctrines and symbols which served in the past will be radically transformed or discarded. Such changes will inevitably be upsetting and unsettling. Nevertheless, the willingness to live without absolute doctrines, absolute certainty and absolute security will manifest the faith of the church that mankind is engaged in an undertaking which will bear fruit only if men have the courage to share in the creative process which we symbolize as God.

GARRY WILLS ON CATHOLIC CULTURE

Q. Is there such a thing any more as Catholic culture? Would we be better off with it or without it?

A. Bingo, large families, fish on Friday, novenas, crustily spangled copes, *Tantum Ergo* before the monstrance, clouds of incense, altar boys dropping the priest's biretta with a plop, pinging of xylophone chimes at Consecration, girls with kleenex hairpinned to their heads, kitchen matchboxes stuck in the sand under the red-cupped candles, the teen-ager in her formal teetering up a ladder in May with flowers for the plaster brow, churchings, car blessings, name-saint days, *Dies Irae* on All Souls (and ducking in and out of church all day for the indulgence), plastic holy water dips at the bedroom door, the Sacred Heart in a heavy frame, scapulars like big postage stamps glued here and there on kids in the swimming pool, J.M.J. at the top of school work, the sign of the cross before a foul shot, Sunday movie in white shoes and pants left over from First Communion, baptism in the spittle of repeated *Exorcizo's,* letters dated by the saint's day, the clank of beads (each as big as a marble) when a nun approached, food-chiseling in Lent (*ne potus noceat*), the stored candy eaten in marathon gluttony after noon on Holy Saturday, priests mumbling their breviaries in the light of a Pullman men's lounge, debates as midnight neared on Saturday about the legitimacy of using Mountain Standard Time to begin the pre-Communion fast. Tribal rites, superstitions, marks of the Catholic ghetto—and, all of them, insignia of a community. These marks and rites were not so much altered, refined, elevated, reformed, transfigured, as — overnight — erased. This was a ghetto that had no one to say "Catholic is Beautiful" over it. Men rose up to change this world who did not love it —demented teachers, ready to improve a student's mind by destroying his body. Do we need a culture? Only if we need a community, however imperfect. Only if we need each other.

DOROTHY DAY ON HOPE

Q. Are you in general optimistic or pessimistic about the future of reform in the church?

A. The kind of controversy going on in the church today is certainly resulting in "clarification of thought," to use a cliché which Peter Maurin, founder of the Catholic Worker, did not hesitate to use as emphasizing the necessity for this clear thinking to precede any program of action. "Wisdom is more active than all active things," *Wisdom 7: 24.* Authority and freedom, man and the state, war and peace on the home front as well as abroad, these are the great issues today and include the problems of poverty, population explosion and race relations. My concern is that the controversies be carried on without violence. To me, non-violence is the all important problem or virtue, to be nourished and cultivated. "Language can as validly be used to repel thrusts or to assert dominance as can fists and guns," Stan Windass writes in a recent *PAX* bulletin from England. "Judge not that ye be not judged," is the title of the excerpt and it is part of his pamphlet or booklet, *A Blow for Peace,* one of a *Where We Stand* Series, published by Darton, Longmans and Todd in England. The ideas in this have dominated my thinking for the past six months. One has to begin by doing violence to one's self to grow in love and understanding of our enemies, and sometimes the worst of these enemies have been of our own household, as Jesus said they would. I'm thinking of the Vietnam war and the bishops, but it applies daily to those close to you in work or parish or community. But "the anger of man worketh not the righteousness of God," St. James wrote two thousand years ago. It certainly helps in keeping the joyous spirit which comes with love. How can I have anything else but hope and confidence, reading the prophets on these ember days, those prophets which Father John McKenzie has helped me to understand? "Do not be sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength."

Let me thank *Commonweal* for printing those occasional papers, *God, Jesus* and *Holy Spirit.* They formed the basis for our third Sunday discussions at the Catholic Worker farm last winter. I like to recall St. Teresa's remark, "I am so grateful a creature that I can be bought with a sardine." (I've lost track of where I've read it.) And certainly we at the Catholic Worker are grateful too. *Commonweal's* George Shuster sent Peter Maurin to me in 1932, and Ed Skillin and countless others on the staff have supported us in many ways and with all kinds of help, nourishing and warming us mentally and physically. So I'm glad to have the opportunity to say thank you.

And oh yes, why worry about empty schools, seminars and even rectories? Maybe the Lord is giving us a little reminder that there has been too much building going on, and that it is time to

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use some of these buildings for the poor, for families. Out in Milwaukee evicted families were moving into empty army barracks. I've heard of Sacred Heart nuns' using an empty novitiate for a day care center for the children of the poor, and Redemptorist sisters' making room for aged senile patients put out of a mental hospital during a recent strike. The State interferes, of course, but perhaps it is time the sisters were taught holy disobedience as a loving and nonviolent way to combat bureaucracy.

The problem of the Papal States was cleared up over the last 100 years (after a fashion), and certainly the financial problems of too much money and too many investments will also be taken care of, one way or another. "This corruption must put on incorruption," as St. Paul wrote, and while the outer body is falling apart, the inner is being renewed! Shocking and stimulating thoughts for us all.

R. RUETHER ON OPEN QUESTIONS

Q. What do you think are the chief unanswered or unasked questions in the church?

A. Discussion and criticism in the American Catholic church have been intense and even strident over the years since the close of the Second Vatican Council, but they have been, in some ways, strangely limited in scope. Discussion has been confined primarily to institutional questions, questions of authority and structure. The questions of faith, the questions of the meaningfulness of inherited doctrinal statements have been left largely unexplored. This seems to me to have been partly due to the background of the American lay participants. They have come from backgrounds in Catholic journalism or in academic fields outside theology, such as philosophy, history or literature. The participants have not been students of the Bible or the history of doctrine. They have thus combined a basic diffidence toward raising questions of faith inherited from their Catholic schooling, with a certain lack of rapport with Biblical and theological language. They have not felt particularly at home in what Karl Barth called 'the strange world of the Bible.' Consequently lay Catholic journalism has been able to propose the most startling departures from tradition with very little sensitivity to their theological implications and with a superficial maintenance of Baltimore cathechism orthodoxy.

I would propose that this inconsistency is due to (and ought to) break out in the open very soon. It should become clear that the real unanswered questions are the questions of faith. But Catholic lay liberals in America have not done their homework in this area. They are still largely ignorant of 150 years of critical Biblical studies and theological revision which make many of their churchly presuppositions highly questionable. They still have very little historical perspective on the development of doctrine in its wide-ranging variety, and thus very little sense of how what they assume to be the 'tradition' fits into its actual context. I would predict that when and if the tools for this kind of discussion become available to the free Catholic press, the effects will be far more traumatic than any questioning that has transpired up until now. Catholic liberals will discover that, in matters of faith, they are like columns of sand held up by external props with very little backbone of their own. We are quite unprepared for the new kind of questioning that lies ahead and may well dissolve altogether under its impact. The real basic questions are these: whether it is now or was ever truly meaningful to say that Jesus is the Christ, that we have a loving Father in heaven and that we are indeed on our way to a final reconciliation. What we have assumed to be certain answers about these topics will be themselves revealed as radical questions which the Christian experience lays upon human existence and with which we grapple in deepest uncertainty.

DONAL MAHONEY

THE HONEY ROOM

Brother Al, in his hood, is out in his field
making love to his bees.
From my room I can see
him move through his hives
the way people should move
among people.
The bees give him gold and the gold
turns orange in the jars
he sells in a room
near the door of the abbey.
The Honey Room, everyone calls it.
Besides Brother Al only I
go into that room full of honey.
I go in there and bend and look through the jars
in white lids sitting orange and still
on the shelves and the sills.
I bend and I look through jar after jar till
there in the orange, coming clear, I see Sue
standing straight in a field of her own,
with a smile for our garland of children.

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DAN HERR ON MISTAKES

Q. Have mistakes been made in the process of reform since the Council?

A. Of course there have been mistakes made in the "process of reform" since the Council. Mistakes made by everyone involved and by some not involved. Mistakes have been made by the all-out reformers—my favorite example of this category being at the moment Father Joseph Connolly, president of the National Liturgical Conference, famed for his "sip, skip, dip" Communion rubrics. But aside from the excesses of the fringe whose sillyisms could have been anticipated, the problems have come mostly because those entrusted with reform were never committed to it.

From Pope Paul to the pastor of the next parish, reform is really a dirty word; and although they have been forced to adopt a superficial liberalism, their determination to preserve the structure practically unchanged has been in the best Churchillian tradition. Instead of leadership, we have had handwringing, bewailing, viewing with alarm and backstage maneuvering. Most of our clerical leaders are so occupied with preserving their own domains, large or small, that they have little time for renewing and reforming the church. Since many of them do not understand the reform or appreciate the need for it, they have solved their problem by pretending the Council didn't happen—business as usual is their aim. They fret away their days expounding on such trivial subjects as clerical celibacy (a subject which demands a solution so that we can get on to more basic questions), women's hats, liturgical experiments and canon law.

Our indictment of culprits could not be complete without pointing a dirty finger at the liturgists who promised far more than they could deliver and have a penchant for utilizing autocratic methods to achieve "progress"; at the clergy who have yet to attempt an explanation to their congregations of what the Council was all about; at all those who put their faith in Charles Davis or James Shannon or tomorrow's shocker and then tailspin when their hero cops out; at the articulate minority who have too often proved to be petty snobs sneering down their noses at their blue-collar fellow-Catholics; at our parents, their parents, and all the way back for putting up with a distortion of the church for so long that change has proved to be almost more than we can take.

There are many to share the blame for the present sorry mess—but then there is plenty to go around.

GEORGE G. HIGGINS ON A COUNCIL

Q. Do we need another Vatican Council?

A. Yes—almost certainly, I should think, before the end of this century, but not within the immediate future. I say this for the following reasons, among others:

1) We need a little more time to assimilate the unexpected as well as the more predictable results of Vatican II and, with this purpose in mind, more time to develop, by the painful process of trial and error, a variety of new structures in the life of the church. I realize, of course, that many Catholics are sick and tired of this gradualistic, make-haste-slowly approach to renewal and reform and are persuaded that we simply haven't got time to be fooling around with internal "churchy" problems, structural or otherwise, when, in fact, all of the action is somewhere out there in the great big revolutionary secular world. While I can sympathize with this point of view and often find myself agreeing with it, I go along nevertheless with the Anglican theologian, David L. Edwards, when he says in *Religion and Change*—a remarkably good book, by the way—that "the main contribution of the church to the twentieth-century world will, it seems, lie in the quality of its own fellowship and thinking" and that consequently it is "neither surprising nor entirely regrettable that so much of the energy of Christians in our time has been given to what seem to be the internal affairs of the churches—to their reunion and renewal."

2) We also need a little more time to develop the kind of theological and pastoral consensus which alone makes it possible to have a successful Council. It's the function of Councils, normally, to ratify and also, of course, to sharpen and refine an existing consensus, but not to try to create one from scratch when none exists or when one exists only in embryo and needs a little more time and a maximum of freedom to become truly viable.

3) Finally, we need a little more time to prepare the way, psychologically as well as theologically, for a more representative Council—one that will be so structured, within realistic limits, as to make it possible for the entire People of God to have an effective voice in its deliberations. In my opinion, we are not ready, as yet, for such a Council and will not be until such time as we have developed more representative ecclesial structures down below at the local, diocesan, and national level.

If anyone says that the foregoing remarks are polyannish, he has missed the point of the argument. I do not deny for a moment that the present crisis is extremely serious. On the contrary, I think it is so serious that it cannot be resolved by panaceas—and a premature Council would, in my judgment, be just that, namely a panacea. In any event, if it's decided that there ought to be another Council within the immediate future, please count me in. God willing, I will be there with bells on.

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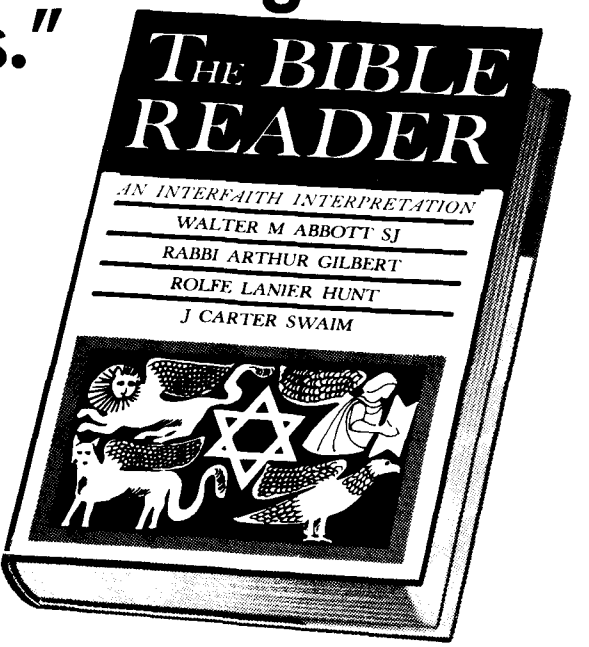

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3. COMMONWEAL'S FUTURE *How should the magazine see itself and its future role? Former editors reply.*

Daniel Callahan

The long-standing premise of *Commonweal* is that the Catholic layman has a distinctive voice and role both in the Church and in the world. Hence the magazine has resolutely tried to hang on to its "lay" and its "Catholic" identity. Historically, the magazine came into existence during an era of sharp separation between the churches, when each (and in particular Catholicism) was intent on maintaining its distinctiveness. The same era also witnessed a sharp distinction between clerics and laymen. In that context, the *Commonweal* premise made sense.

But not now. Since the early sixties, the ecumenical movement has made increasingly peripheral the place of sectarian religious publications. The major problems before Christianity transcend the internal squabbles of the churches. The question today is not "Why Catholicism" (or Protestantism), but "Why Christianity?" The blurring of the lines between cleric and layman, another feature of the past decade, has made exclusively lay- or cleric-edited publications marginal. Doubtless such publications will always have some place; infighting always has a future. But their place will be minor, of interest only to professional religionists.

To choose this kind of future is to choose a negligible place in Christian life. I would hope that the *Commonweal* could bring itself to aspire to something larger and more significant. Quite apart from idealism, however, the choice of a marginal role will have some concrete implications. There will be fewer and fewer readers, for the generation now coming along shows no interest in such things. There will be fewer and fewer good editors or good writers for that kind of a *Commonweal;* even now the talent pool is populated by stock figures who have been around for quite awhile, including writers like myself. If there is a new generation coming along, of the kind who earlier would have been drawn to a magazine like *Commonweal,* it has escaped my attention. There is a new generation, but its interests lie elsewhere.

The choice before *Commonweal* is to continue on its present course, in which case mediocrity, ennui, tired-blood and a gradual downward spiral are likely; or to totally re-think its role and *raison d'être.* The old *raison d'être* is now historically and culturally beside the point.

Should it have the nerve to start afresh, *Commonweal* should (a) hire the best editors it can in the future, whether Catholic or non-Catholic; and (b) let them figure out where the magazine should go. If they are picked because they are bright and lively, concerned about the relationship between religion and culture, man and the world, they will come up with something.

I myself don't really know where the *Commonweal* should go in the future. But I'm the last person who should be asked. As a former editor I am part of something known as the "Commonweal tradition," and thus disqualified to sketch a new direction. For it is that tradition which is in question. Those with vested emotions and well-established ideas are, by all odds, the least likely to come up with the imaginative and helpful answers.

William Clancy

Whatever may be the role of *Commonweal* in the years ahead, I think the magazine will forfeit any real contribution it might make to the future if it sees its function as chiefly to speak to and for the problems, passions and prejudices that are certain to divide us. In other words, I think that *Commonweal,* in the years ahead, must resist calls to universal commitment and demands for instant relevance. In an age of raucous self-righteousness, the magazine must witness to the importance of being—at least sometimes—non-committed, irrelevant, and non-fashionable. It must often say *No* when everyone (especially its best friends) confidently expect it to say Yes.

These things, as matters of general principle, seem true to me because the role of a journal of opinion—as distinguished from the role of a house organ—is not to reflect a nation, a party, a church, a culture or an age, but rather it is to hold a mirror up to them—a mirror which, catching some glimpse of their deformities and some hint of their pretensions, may force them, if only for a moment, to the cruel but necessary therapy of self-doubt.

For many years of its history, *Commonweal* defined itself (and distinguished itself from most of its contemporaries) as a journal which stood not for any program but for a "point of view." It distrusted programs but nourished what may now seem an old-fashioned, naive or "irrelevant" respect for the enduring worth of civilized discourse. I would suggest that the more valuable contribution the journal might make to our society in the years ahead would be to maintain this tradition where it has survived and to revive it in those areas of the magazine's life where it has floundered. In the age of angry partisanship that now engulfs us—and in the years ahead is certain to grow more bitter—*Commonweal,* both in its style and in its substance should serve as an exemplar of values which must survive the acrimony of the times if man's future is to be tolerable at all.

This does not mean that *Commonweal* should become conservative. It means, rather, that in an age of increasing polarization and partisanship, it should, even more than in its past, avoid

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identification with any particular label or party and provide what may increasingly be one of the few serious journals where men of various points of view can meet in responsible dialogue. Maintaining its own roots in and loyalty to the Catholic-Christian tradition, it will provide a place where that tradition can be continually reexamined and redefined in terms of a deeply incarnational theology of faith and service, church and world, God and man.

As it does this, it seems to me, *Commonweal* will be both less Catholic and more Catholic, less committed and more committed than it now seems to be. The journal will be less churchy—less concerned with strictly internal and institutional Catholic matters, less readily shocked over the venalities and stupidities of Chancery offices around the nation and the latest banalities of sundry bishops; but it will be more Catholic in witnessing to that Kingdom of God which is already begun amongst us and which, with groanings and weepings, awaits its growth and final manifestation among men. The magazine will thus resist all attempts to politicize all of life. And this will be in its best anti-totalitarian, anti-monistic tradition.

And the magazine will be less committed to every angry crusade of the moment—seeing its chief function to be the critical and often ironic examination of all conditioned movements. But it will be deeply committed to its basic, historic premise that man who was wondrously created has, through the incarnation, been even more wondrously renewed, and that all of us are summoned, in our time and place, to make his dignity real.

W. H. Auden advised us, some years ago, that in the age now upon us we should "read the *New Yorker*/trust in God/and take short views." Herbert Butterfield, in his conclusion to *Christianity and History*, gave analogous but, for *Commonweal*, perhaps more pertinent advice: moving and fighting, in the midst of history's contingencies and disappointments, hold fast to Jesus Christ: and for the rest be non-committed.

James Finn

Is it an error to advise one's successors how to deal with the future? Probably, but traditionalist that I am, I yield to the custom.

To touch on only certain aspects of *Commonweal:* in the present and immediate future I would like *Commonweal* to be distinctive because of its strenuous effort (1) to be reflective (2) to distinguish between the political and non-political (3) to maintain a tone of civility.

1. Who does not wish to be reflective? Naturally! Well, let me put the proposition another way. In the contemporary rush of events, when the stream is running at floodtide, is it better to be in midstream and paddling to outstrip the current, heady with exultation at such speed, or better to be on shore, or in an idling eddy, observing? That metaphor may be as misleading as Wilde's epigram that the man who claims to understand both sides of a problem probably understands neither. I think the answer is that we would like to be both in midstream and on shore; we would like to understand both sides of the problem, yet able to opt for one. But in the journalistic world that is *Commonweal's* today, if we need passionate commitment we need, even more, reflective understanding. This can come only from a tradition that has a sense of history, which is *Commonweal's* tradition.

2. "Seek ye first the political kingdom." At a time when so many are following this dictum of Nkrumah, we desperately need voices which distinguish between the political and the non-political. Those who once were tempted to theologize all life are now, apparently, tempted to politicize all life. The results are equally disastrous. "Two there are" must remain the working proposition, with the real work the act of distinguishing.

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is one of high pitch and low level; it is strident and degraded. In conflict and confrontation, not only the opponent's position, but the opponent is contemptuously dismissed. A journal where civility is consistent, not selective is, in such circumstances, invaluable. Civility need not be genteel or flabby nor exclude the coarse and the vulgar. It flows almost inevitably, however, from a deep respect for oneself and others, a *Commonweal* tradition.

Richard Horchler

I wish *Commonweal* would be serious, in the years ahead. It used to be, as we all know, a terribly serious magazine. People joked about the "good gray *Commonweal*" and parodied its style. It was said you couldn't get through a page of *Commonweal* without bumping into half a dozen complexities and a few ambiguities. Dilemmas, enigmas and paradoxes, too, were everywhere, and the favorite editorial approach seemed to be on the one hand this but on the other hand that.

The parodists were right, in that seriousness can degenerate into humorlessness and hand-wringing. That's a danger. But at the same time the effort to be serious tends to prevent other faults, like glibness, superficiality and simplism. And if endless insistence that things are more complicated than they seem leads to paralysis, as well as boredom for those who are listening, the presumption that things are less complicated than they seem encourages ignorance, and is just as boring.

In fact, seriousness about the condition of being human I think has to lead to conflict and tension. *Commonweal* in the past tried to be serious about liberal politics and non-partisanship, about membership in the church and moving beyond particularism, about humanism and transcendent faith, about all sorts of warring commitments. As a result, editorial stands were often uneasy, seldom "correct" according to the terms of any single ideology. But apart from issues, and however well or ill the issues may be recognized and dealt with, re-

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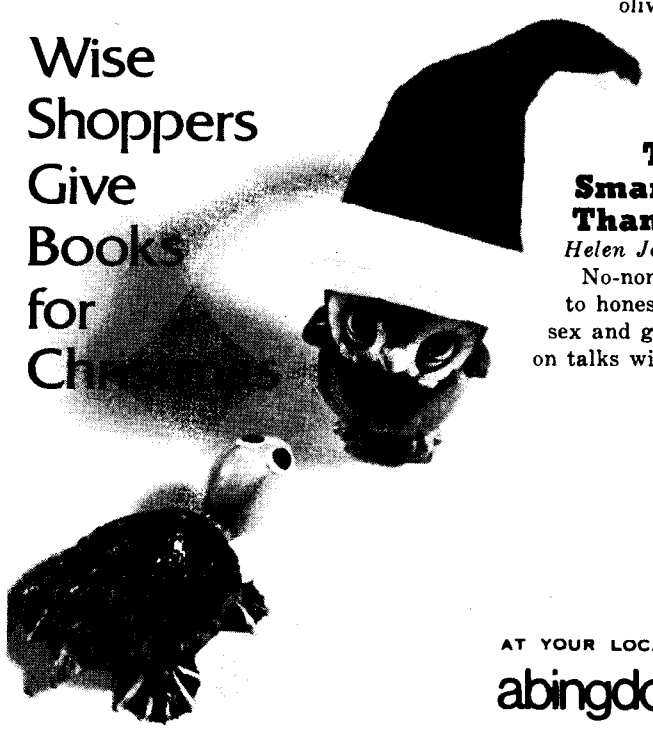

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lentless skepticism about the clothes of any emperor whatsoever is a characteristic badly needed in American life and American journalism, including liberal journalism. I don't see much of it in the *Commonweal* these days; I hope I will in the future.

Most of all I hope *Commonweal* in the years ahead will be serious about religion. Atrocity stories about the institutional church are no longer either interesting or important, it seems to me, because the religious crisis today is so much deeper and graver than any question of reforming abuses. Exposés of bishops, or popes, are in their way as trivial and parochial as the old-style panegyrics. If the church were democratically structured, if all the bishops were wise and brave, if all the priests were married political activists, if Daniel Berrigan were pope, would the crisis of faith be any less? In our time, to claim to take the church, or Christianity, or institutional religion, seriously—which I presume *Commonweal* does—is to make an affirmation far more radical and sensational than the endorsement of rock liturgy or Christian pacifism. It is such an extraordinary affirmation that it imposes an obligation to reveal why and how it is made, and this involves, however they may be disguised, unglamorous and over-thirty pursuits—philosophical, theological, anthropological, psychological, sociological and all the other ways of getting at the fundamental questions about man, God and the nature of reality.

That's where the action really is, I think, and why I talk about seriousness. But then I'm an old-timer.

John Leo

I haven't a doubt in the world that this symposium will attract a goodly share of pleas for the rule of reason, more measured responses and other Nixonian suggestions for *Commonweal* to lower its voice. Not that it's been all that loud, but to many of us ex-editors and old retainers, it will predictably sound shrill and not at all like the good old days. This is the trouble with the annual consultation with the elders, who do, after all, speak from and about the past. But the current editors will know —if they are at all in touch with what we used to call the "*Commonweal* community"—that nobody thinks that way any more. At least not the writers or potential writers for a magazine of the 70's.

Alas, everyone grows older and more out of touch, and my own coming senescence will be rigorously planned to exclude nostalgia, as well as seminars designed to instruct those on the scene about how we handled former problems in former years. The advice of ex-editors, particularly, is well known. After all, we have given it year after year both on the magazine and off, and I, for one, have no wish to become part of the collective Polonius.

The signs are, first, that religious publishing is in serious trouble, for the obvious reasons, and second, that *Commonweal* no longer has a natural constituency. It did in the old days, when anyone dissatisfied with the party line could repair to the *Commonweal* margin and discover all the shared, progressive views that created a community of sorts. That community is now splintered a dozen ways, and *Commonweal* must rely on the wit and experience of editors on the scene to cope with the splinters. *Commonweal* is too much in love with the past. Hire good editors, give them their head, and stop wheeling out the ex-editors for ponderous advice on "Whither *Commonweal*?"

William Pfaff

Looking at *Commonweal's* past, two particular qualities distinguish the magazine, and together they seem to me to define a role. The first is the magazine's Catholicism. It has been a consciously Christian journal, serious about moral issues, attempting to be honest about Christianity itself and about a Christian judgment upon human society and human existence. This has given *Commonweal* its primary importance to American society, and certainly to the church. Its literary and political commentary over the last 45 years has been significant but, as a whole, less distinguished than that of many of its contemporaries. The magazine has justified itself and will, I think, continue to do so only as an independent journal speaking out of a particular religious tradition, attempting to apply a critical intelligence both to that tradition and to the society within which it exists. That Catholicism is itself experiencing a crisis of intellect and belief seems to me to strengthen

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the need for *Commonweal*, and the demands on its openness, its willingness to be serious.

Openness seems to me the other important quality which *Commonweal* has possessed. The magazine has often enough been parochial in politics as well as religion, but there has been a larger and persisting openness to intelligence, experience, and controversy which has marked the magazine. Conceived in resistance to the parochialism of Catholicism, *Commonweal* has often enough found its own orthodoxies but never has —quite—surrendered to them. It has valued ideas and people, and for 45 years has been more willing to publish whatever serious people want to say than any other American magazine I know. This ransoms much mediocrity, and has given *Commonweal* a special—can I even say a unique?—place in the secular debate of this country. I do not mean that the record is unmuddled or that *Commonweal* has not at times been puritan in its judgments, complacent, uncharitable, but overall the record is a good one. Camus once described the intellectual vocation in this age of vicious politics as to 'disintoxicate' men. This seems to me a crucial role: to be willing to argue and to listen, to deal with people honestly, to respect men.

Philip Scharper

Commonweal, in its forty-fifth year, has entered upon a post-Christian, post-Marxist era, in which the energies of man must be bent to the task of forging a new humanism. In this effort *Commonweal* could assume a valuable and perhaps irreplaceable role, even as it has played such a part in the shaping of that period which has both preceded and made possible the post-Christian, post-Marxist era.

The forces are already stirring which seem designed to bring about a new society and a new Church. It is part of *Commonweal*'s burden to attempt to "look into the womb of time and tell which seeds will grow and which will not." This burden is one of informed insight, not of ululating prophecy; of reflection upon men and movements, not of random reporting about them.

As such, it is closely linked to the task of distinguishing between reality and appearances, between what is and what merely seems to be. It is a function which Lionel Trilling ascribed to the novelist, and which Socrates ascribed to the philosopher.

To say that it is also a central task of the editors and contributors of *Commonweal* is not to speak pretentiously. To lead others to discern the difference between what is and what merely seems to be is essentially a liberating, hence religious task. It is the role of both Socratic midwife and *vates*—priest, prophet and poet.

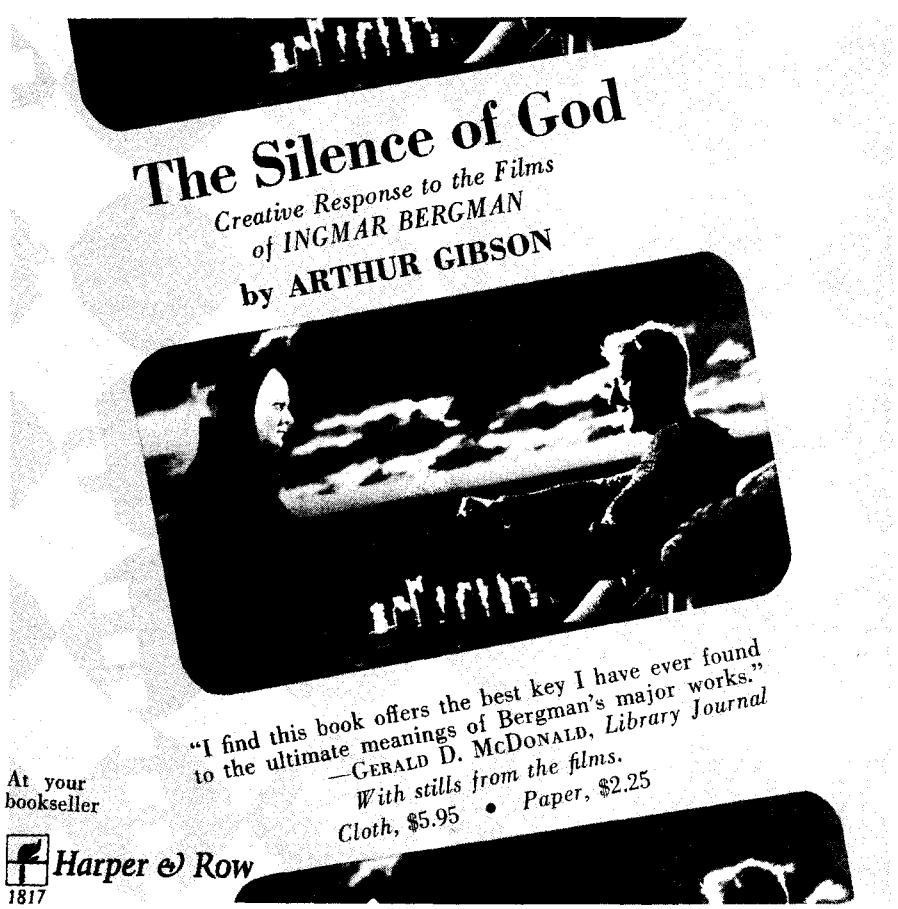
It is, indeed, the task which *Commonweal* has undertaken in the past, always with determination and often with distinction: the Spanish Civil War; the McCarthyite madness; the frozen waterfall of pre-Conciliar Catholicism; the energies unleashed by the thaw of Vatican II; the moral grotesquerie of Vietnam.

A failure of nerve threatens to become pandemic in our culture and our churches, and both may fall victim to the growing number of reactionaries within rather than to the revolutionaries without. The slogans of neither will save us, nor will their easy solutions coughed up quickly to meet superficial analyses of deep, tangle-rooted and very real problems.

In such a world, *Commonweal* can be one of the many needed instruments of salvation, if the phrase be not considered too passé or pious. As one who can trace from late boyhood the influence of *Commonweal* upon pulse and psyche, I can only wish that it will continue to be for many generations, as it was for mine, a civilized voice that was heard all the more clearly because it spoke through the din of barbaric political, cultural and ecclesiastical pitchmen.

George N. Shuster

The question put to us would stump even the most unflinching palm reader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or astrologer. But here goes. I think the time ahead will most probably be neo-Romantic and also have some of the texture of the Orient. Accordingly there may be some value in taking a good look at the Romantics of the early nineteenth century. It seems to me likely that the next great poet who shows up will be akin in spirit to Shelly rather than to Wordsworth or Goethe. And when he writes his ode for somebody's Ninth Symphony it will probably remind people of Mao in spite of a strong dash of Werther and his sorrows.

If *Commonweal* remains faithful to its central tradition it will not try to avoid swimming where the big water will be. Of course there will be nothing easy about that. Since I am still basically an historian, I anticipate that a classical reaction will set in very soon. The church, too, will witness one. There may even be confrontations as serious and violent as those which preceded the French Revolution and the rise of Nazism. But then again the final outcome could be unmitigated apathy and boredom.

What about *Commonweal* specifically? I would say that it reflects a disjuncture in terms of the audience it addresses—a disjuncture of what used to be something like a "liberal" synthesis. There are many readers who continue to read the magazine primarily for this reason. It does not try to ignore the

Christian Hope

Alexander Pope did not realize how very true it is that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. We have a little knowledge of thermonuclear weapons —enough to know how to make them, enough, perhaps, to poison the atmosphere and make life on this planet impossible—and we have thus brought a new force, a new determinant, into history. But we have not yet learned to take account of this new force in our practical calculations. We continue to think in terms that the new force has made meaningless—terms like "war" and "retaliation" and "victory." Our logic is still the logic of bullets, and we place ourselves in situations where bullets might have saved us. But no great power can stop at bullets these days; we know that we will not. And thus we prepare the world to be a cemetery.

Facing this, what should be the Christian's attitude? With his certainty of final triumph guaranteed by Christ's Resurrection, with his sure knowledge that, in the end, all will be well, what should be his judgment on this world as it prepares its funeral pyre? "The earth trembles and is silent when God rises up to execute His sentence," we read in the Offertory of the Easter Mass. It is easy for the Christian to take comfort in this. What might soon befall the world can be considered God's sentence on the world. For the secular humanist the destruction of his civilization is the final, unthinkable, unbearable defeat. It is The End. But the Christian has always known that here is no abiding city, that God's judgment lies upon it. He knows too that this world's destruction would not be The End. And so he may, at this Eastertime, be tempted to write off a world which seems, in any event, already to have written off itself. He may feel that all he can now do is retreat to the Absolute.

But such an attitude would betray the Christian vocation, which is not to abandon but to save the world. The Christian cannot allow himself the luxury of despair even when the darkness seems everywhere about. He cannot merely retreat to his own certainties and fortify himself against disaster with his ultimate optimism. Christ wept over the things that were to come upon Jerusalem. His followers too must concern themselves with their time and place. Knowing that, in the final sense, everything depends on God, they must still act as though everything depended on them.

Editorial, April 18, 1955

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holes in the pavement which the two orders, religious and civil, go along. Sometimes even it appears to enjoy getting into some hole or other, and this seems to some of my friends, young and old alike, just the thing to do.

Being in this kind of situation can produce a measure of irritability which to my mind is not really compatible with effective intellectual opposition. Some of your *friends* feel that this has been too characteristic of the magazine of late. Irritability is not satire. The only excuse for it is high moral blood pressure. I note that in spite of all the opportunities provided, very little good satire is being written, but John Fischer, in the Easy Chair of *Harper's* shows how it can be managed. If *Commonweal* can master this art it will in my judgment earn a bright place for itself in American journalism.

CONTRIBUTORS—SECTION III

DANIEL CALLAHAN, an editor from 1961-68, is at present Staff Associate, The Population Council, and Director, Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences.

FATHER WILLIAM CLANCY, an editor from 1952 to 1955, prior to his ordination to the priesthood, is now Provost of the Pittsburgh Oratory.

JAMES FINN, an editor from 1955 to 1961, is editor of *Worldview*, published by the Council on Religion and International Affairs.

RICHARD HORCHLER, an editor from 1957 to 1962, is now Dean of Administration at York College, City University of N.Y.

JOHN LEO, an editor from 1963 to 1967, recently left the staff of the *New York Times* to become an editor of *Scanlan's Monthly*.

WILLIAM PFAFF, an editor from 1949 to 1955, is co-author of three books on contemporary history and politics, *Power and Impotence*, *The Politics of Hysteria*, and *The New Politics*.

PHILIP SCHARPER, an editor from 1955 to 1957, is editor-in-chief of Sheed & Ward and Chairman of the Religious Education Association.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER, an editor from 1926 to 1937, was then President of Hunter College, New York, and is now Assistant to the President of Notre Dame.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 197)

But is anything so patently erroneous in Papke's retelling as his disheveled ordering of the student speakers, not to mention his numbering among the speakers on Commencement Day the Class Odist, who actually spoke at Class Day ceremonies the day before? And what of the "chorus" of boos Papke claims to have heard from the Business School graduates, or the standing ovations he failed to notice for the Latin Orator? Was Papke, who took his degree in History, really at Harvard Commencement? Or was he, rather, attending a philosophy professor's mini-commencement at a location fully outside Tercentenary Theatre?

Papke's slipshod sense of history continues in his account of the afternoon meeting of the Alumni. The endorsement of Stewart Udall's view of Athens and Sparta ("Udall knew what the score was") shows that Papke has not read Thucydides and the Old Oligarch, knows little of the Athenian League, and might sharpen his judgment on matters historical by spending as much time in the History Library as the Latin Orator spent in the Classics Library. But, alas, Papke says that he has "finished" his last day at Harvard. *Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale!*

D. P. NICASTRO

Drafting Chicanos

Saint Louis

To the Editors: With great interest I read Cynthia Manne's "Law and Hair Down Mexico Way" [Oct. 10]. I am wondering and pondering: Does she know how the Mexican-Americans are treated in California, Texas, Nevada, Colorado and Arizona by the Norte Americanos? Does she know that the draft boards are sending more and more of these Chicanos and the death rate in Vietnam of these people are higher?

A. POCHA

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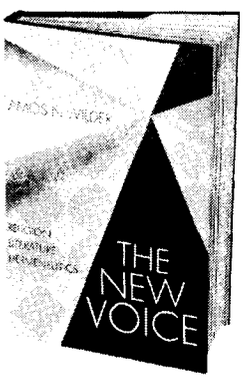

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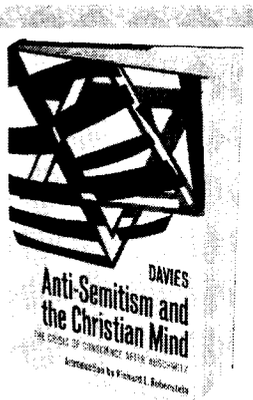

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